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ABSTRACT

This book was developed to provide explanatory support material for the classroom teacher or guidance counselor interested in cooperative learning techniques. A brief section on how to use the book is followed by a discussion of the theory behind the concept of cooperative learning. Other introductory sections focus on teambuilding; setting up cooperative groups; and moving from cooperative groups to the sharing circle, a unique small-group discussion process that is used to promote teacher-student and student-student interaction. Directions for six sample sharing circles are included. Twenty strategies and lessons are detailed in the book. The strategies illustrate the diversity of curricular areas which easily adapt to cooperative learning. Specific lessons in the book have been designed to underscore the potential which cooperative learning has in the field of counseling and guidance. Many of the classroom strategies and activities throughout the book are appropriate for use by counselors working in small group situations. It is hoped that the collaborative learning models offered in this book will promote greater self-confidence in students, a sense of direction, responsibility, growth in organizational skills, metacognitive development, and interest in subject matter. (NB)

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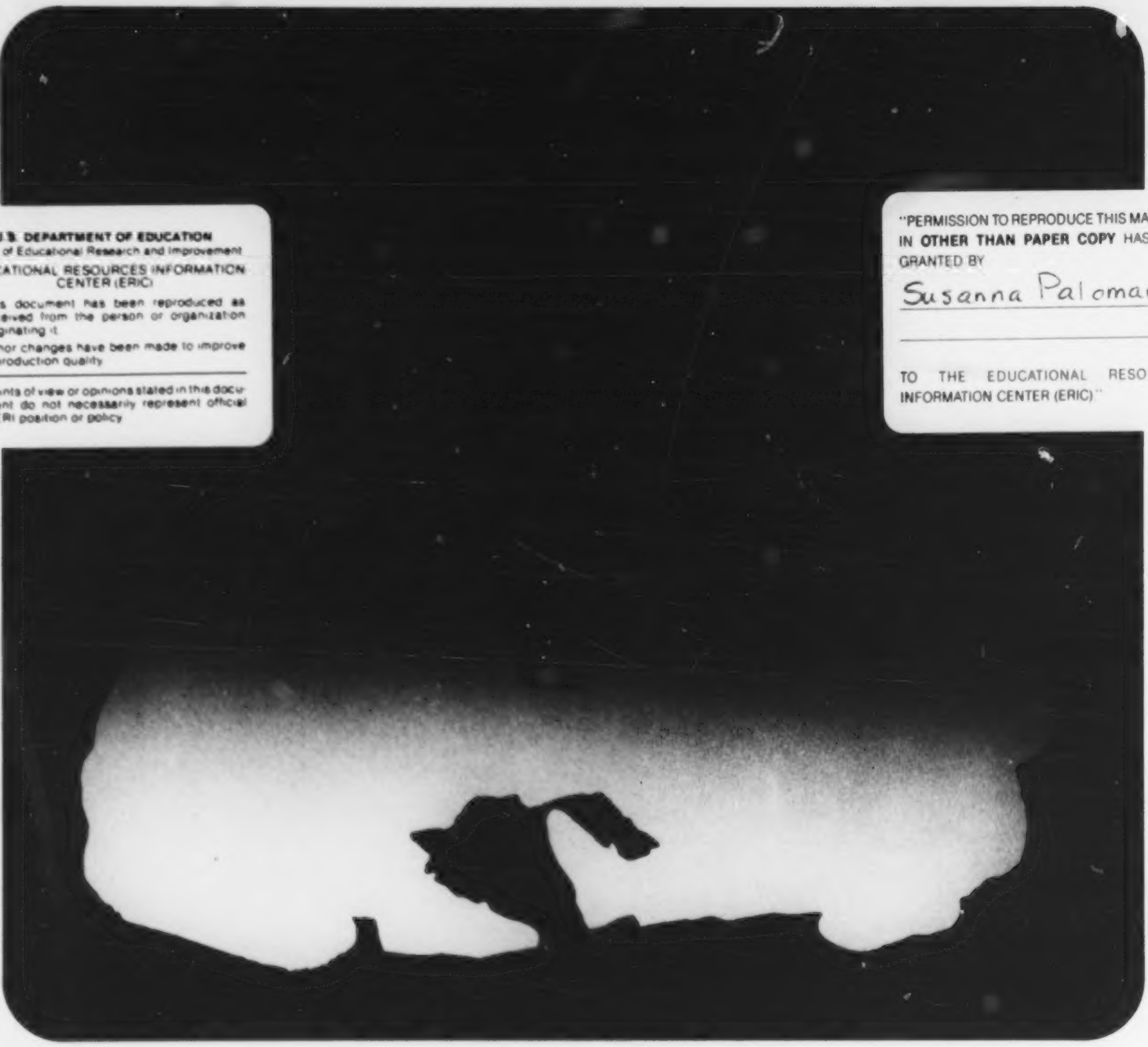

Increasing Personal Growth and Creating Lifelong Learners Through Cooperative Learning

By: Susan Finney

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TOGETHER I CAN

Increasing Personal Growth and Creating Lifelong Learners Through Cooperative Learning

Susan Finney

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FOREWORD

Cooperative learning has been heralded for some time now as an effective and innovative way of teaching children to work collaboratively for a common purpose. Prodigious numbers of researchers have validated the efficacy of learning content material through teamwork, and a great many of them have published books, guides, and scholarly articles on the subject. Since teamwork is not a familiar construct for children, except in sports, well-defined strategies are needed to conceptually move it into the classroom.

In its classroom guise, the enhancement of learning and the improvement of interpersonal relationships are benefits which soon become obvious. Less obvious, but of particular interest, is the impact of collaborative group work on individual growth and esteem building. In classrooms where cooperative learning is used frequently, its orchestrated learning activities provide unique opportunities for the development of a wide variety of valuable attributes for all children. The strategies outlined and illustrated in this book have been employed in classrooms where both new and experienced teachers have happily added them to their teaching repertoire. To nurture children as they are in the process of learning how to learn, is a powerful combination.

- Susan Finney, M.A.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Have you ever gone to a professional conference, seminar, or workshop and come away from it with so many good ideas that you could hardly wait to get back to your classroom to try them? That's what happened to me a few years ago when I first attended a conference on cooperative learning. The lecturer was outstanding, the lessons he demonstrated were dynamite, and I couldn't help thinking about the possibilities. I returned to my classroom and started reworking lessons to fit the cooperative models which had been explained, but the manuals and information to which I had to refer were simply not user-friendly. Real-life classroom use took a back seat to research findings and sociological theory. While experimenting with the strategies, it occurred to me that there had to be an easier way to provide explanatory support material for the classroom teacher or guidance counselor.

This book is about possibilities, and it is about variations on a theme. The possibilities are the strategies, carefully explained in an "overview" format. The variations on a theme are the activities which follow each strategy in order to illustrate its various uses. There are twenty strategies, each one clearly labeled as a strategy. Following each strategy, there are three, four or more possible activities which demonstrate uses for it which cross the curriculum. For example, the strategy entitled, "Sharearound," is followed by "How I Got My Name" (a language arts activity), "The Samurai Warrior" (a social studies activity), "When I Was Young in the Mountains" (another language arts activity), and "Current Events" (a social studies/language arts activity). You will be able to envision the possibilities which exist for you in your classroom when you understand this format.

This book also contains a theory section which gives the background and rationale for cooperative learning. From my classroom experience and my experience conducting workshops, I recognize that change does not occur easily. It helps to understand that the cooperative learning process just didn't suddenly arrive on the scene, that it is not simply a fad or swing of the pendulum; it has validity and a history. The theory section, labeled "Philosophically Speaking," is valuable for parents and administrators to read as well.

There is a section on "Setting Up Cooperative Groups," and discussion of the uses of roles and rules. Each of these is succinct and gives basic information needed to get started. Somewhat more space is devoted to integrating sharing circles with the cooperative group process. While sharing circles are not a prerequisite to cooperative learning, the two in combination have inestimable value as they promote not only a sense of community, but provide the basis for thematic instruction. The bonding and trust which are intrinsic to sharing circles enhance all of the cooperative learning strategies outlined and illustrated in this book.

Begin at the beginning. Seat your students in groups of four and use one or two of the team-building suggestions or jump right in and adapt a lesson you love to one of the cooperative models. Change is much easier to implement with explanations and examples that have relevance and allow you to see possibilities. And they are endless! Enjoy!

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PHILOSOPHICALLY SPEAKING...

THE THEORY BEHIND *TOGETHER, I CAN*

The foundation upon which cooperative learning is based has been "under construction" for several years. Unlike much in education which appears to be the result of that dependable pendulum swing, cooperative learning could not have happened earlier. It has evolved from combinations, amalgamations, and mergers. It is the brainchild of disparate theorists who, were they able to share their ideas, could agree on very little. It is the sum of its many parts.

Great ideas have a way of resurfacing, sometimes added to and enriched in the process. In college courses, you probably read more chapters on the psychology and history of education than you wanted to, but integrating that knowledge and finding personal meaning took some years of experience. Many of the great ideas you've read about have never lost their validity. Some have been reworked and renamed, and often, today's professional magazines feature articles which hearken back to ideas whose genesis goes back to the early years of this century. For that reason, I'd like to briefly highlight some of the major contributors so you'll understand how incremental the process has been from which cooperative learning finally emerged. It is fascinating to look back and retrospectively view its conceptual beginnings.

In *Democracy and Education* (1916), John Dewey observed that the classroom should become a genuine community where the emphasis was on social interaction, cooperation, and communication. He believed that the true measure of excellence was the extent to which that sense of community was achieved. Dewey's *Experience and Education* (1938), set stringent criteria for learning experiences. Dewey believed that developmentally appropriate experiences had to enable the individual to create meaning. That, and his espousal of self-direction are especially relevant to cooperative learning. He was also an early proponent of thematic teaching, before it even had a name, suggesting science be studied in relation to social studies and that reading, writing, and mathematics be taught as learning tools, not as drill.

Jerome Bruner, thirty years later, looked carefully at learner motivation as well, and determined that extending the reflective thinking process to include more active involvement in solution-finding increased initiative, comprehension, and interest in one's own learning. Bruner recommended group discussions for stimulating participation and awareness. All of these factors mentioned are important components of the cooperative learning process. Jean Piaget, Hilda Taba, and Benjamin Bloom joined the unknowing, yet growing, cadre of foundation builders as they chose to focus on the child and the development of a set of cognitive skills which could be applied to learning virtually anything. Believing that thinking can be taught, that it is an active transaction between the student and information, and that previously learned generalizations and facts can be applied to new situations, another layer was added to the theoretical base.

Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers saw education as a means to self-discovery. Curriculum was to bring personal meaning to each learner, a surprising and significant addendum to cooperative learning. That education be relevant to students' interests and to society's needs was the focus of Ivan Illich, Michael Scriven, Paulo Freire, and Alvin Toffler. These reconstructionists asked also that students be educated to deal with change, with social issues, and to be made more aware of leadership - all conceptually recognized as integral to the theory behind cooperative learning. That was just the "hard hat" phase of foundation building.

A brief overview of the beginnings of cooperative learning only partially explains its gradual emergence as a powerful educational tool. What those theorists conjectured and tested, the researchers continued to validate. Communication skills, a sense of community, and positive social interaction are basic to cooperative learning and inherent in an individual's successful school functioning. The qualities of relevancy, personal meaning, and self-direction exemplified in the strategies in this book are the same factors which create lifelong learners. Effectiveness in all the modalities of language - reading, writing, speaking, listening - is, of necessity, required for entry into the workplace. In cooperative learning classrooms they are practiced with emphasis on active listening and clear expression. Competency in speaking and listening are integral to collaborative work and from a child's earliest years can be strategically and developmentally enhanced. In terms of the dynamics of communication and thinking skill development, the two are interwoven. It is possible in actual classroom practice to "have it all." What the theorists have generated can be accomplished with cooperative learning.

Education has always responded to trends, perhaps sometimes more readily than it should have. Generally, it is the good ideas that work, such as those identified, which are behind those trends that particularly captivate us. It is the coalescing of those ideas which David W. Johnson, and Roger T. Johnson recognized as a potential innovation. They successfully inaugurated the cooperative learning movement and are, perhaps, its best-known gurus. Its essence derived from its polyglot foundation, the Johnsons' research-based publications expanded the structure and prepared the way for others to add-on and remodel. They continue to expand and expound as they refine their methodology. With a guide to implementing the Johnson's approach, Dee Dishon and Pat Wilson O'Leary stressed basic principles and training in cooperative skills. Spencer Kagan, Shlomo Sharan, and Robert Slavin are other names identified with the popularization and promulgation of cooperative group learning.

As eclectic as their varied approaches may be, all essentially are in agreement regarding some of the fundamental elements of cooperative learning: face-to-face interaction in learning groups, a sense of positive interdependence among group members (Johnson and Johnson call this the "sink or swim together" approach), individual accountability for each group member, and the teaching of collaborative skills for working together effectively.

The major limitation for the classroom teacher, which in no way detracts from the quality of the theory, the credibility of the authors, or the excellence of the materials, is that of ease of integrating theory into classroom practice. At every workshop on cooperative learning that I've conducted, the concerns are focused on adaptation of strategies to existing curriculum. Plans for individual and group accountability, plans for structuring positive interdependence, and plans for monitoring the development of social skills are all important, but for practical purposes somewhat obscure the issue in which the classroom teacher is most interested - **what are the strategies I can use, and how can I adapt my lessons to them?**

This book was written to fill that need. Organized by strategy, with illustrative lessons, the theoretical issues are interwoven with curriculum. Content is integrated with communication experiences. The cooperative group as both audience and individual builds understandings together. Learning experiences are offered which provide for intrigue and build cognitive awareness. The educational context for assimilation and accommodation, Piaget's dual elements of cognition, is present in full force. The interaction in cooperative groups allows for discovery, awareness, rediscovery, and increased perception as new information is actively processed. As the new ideas interact with the old, rearranging and realigning occurs as children in cooperative groups create meaning for themselves.

What else happens in cooperative groups? Nurture happens. Self-confidence, responsibility, growth of organizational skills, decision-making, experimenting, exploring, learning from others, experiencing feelings, reflecting, discussing, empathizing, and motivation. You will start hearing the words "we" and "our" instead of "I" and "my." You will have time to guide students in the development of interpersonal skills and concurrently see their feelings of self worth increase as they become more competent. As they acquire new information, skills, and abilities, and can express themselves and listen to others, they begin to realize that human beings are alike in many ways - and unique within those commonalities.

As an astute teacher, you can capitalize on cooperative learning to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. And, as you choose among the strategies presented, you can perpetuate the "student as worker" focus. For your students to consciously recognize that the classroom is their workplace, and that a workplace can be exciting, is of indisputable worth. The revelation that subject matter can be interesting is of incalculable value.

The next move is yours. I encourage you to begin integrating these strategies into your lessons as soon as possible. Begin with something familiar and adapt it to one of the strategies that most appeals to you. Try several different lessons in different curricular areas using the same strategy. Allow your students the latitude to adjust to the group structure. You will discover that the transition will be exhilarating and that soon you won't remember that you taught a particular lesson in any other way. The strategies you feel most comfortable with will soon feel natural to you, and your students will respond similarly.

Each of the strategies is thoroughly discussed and examples across the curriculum follow in such a way as to make it almost a recipe and as useful as possible. This guide offers strategies which teach subject matter in an unpressured format, strategies planned for stimulation and enjoyment, and strategies engineered so that children can learn how to learn and develop positive attitudes toward their own education. The strategies not only teach subject matter, but subject matter becomes the means by which students are taught how to learn!

It is in those classrooms where cooperative learning plays a major role in a teacher's repertoire that children can become motivated active learners. Let it be your classroom!

SETTING UP COOPERATIVE GROUPS

Groups of four, which are structured heterogeneously, are accepted as the traditional cooperative learning model. While there may be times when you will group students in other ways, both research and experience have confirmed the desirability of that configuration. The groupings, over time, convey a sense of connectiveness and acceptance needed by children for the interaction which is to occur. Desks and tables should be arranged so that the groups of four are seated together and somewhat separated from other groups. If that isn't workable, attempt to create a seating arrangement which, with minimum furniture moving, can accommodate a change to groups of four for cooperative activities. In settings where the numbers won't allow for groups of four, three or five will work, but groups of four are most desirable because each group member then has someone with whom to communicate.

Deciding upon who is to be in each group can be as arbitrary, or as planned, as your particular teaching style dictates. Knowing your students, you may wish to group two of high ability, one of average ability, and one of lower ability. You may wish to take cards with your students' names on them, shuffle them, and arbitrarily distribute them in groups of four. Some cooperative learning practitioners have used a deck of cards turned so that their numbers can't be seen and all of the two's sit together, etc. This may be done with the students present or before they enter the room. To avoid potentially negative situations, there are advantages to explaining how you will establish groups, if you are doing it arbitrarily, and then set them up prior to the arrival of students.

Some authors suggest that children simply be seated together for two or three weeks before any cooperative strategies are introduced. During that time groups would work together with no particular structure, except that they would begin to see themselves as a group. Everyday tasks might be assigned to different groups to begin fostering interaction and cooperative behaviors. Contrarily, it has also been recommended that the strategies be implemented at the same time groups are established. Interestingly, it works both ways. Much is dependent on the make-up of your particular group of children as well as your willingness and enthusiasm. Any time that change is introduced, there will be some resistance. Once your students have experienced cooperative learning, the excitement and involvement intrinsic to it is your best argument for this innovation.

One question that is always asked is in reference to the length of time groups should stay together. There should be an adequate time for bonding to occur and projects to be completed. Six to eight weeks has always seemed ideal, but again, there are varying viewpoints. One of the advantages of cooperative learning is that, as a process, it is still "becoming." It is flexible and adaptable and little is carved into stone. Relationships among group members may be nurtured not only by patience, but by the purposeful choices of activities. While the strategies themselves create opportunities for interdependence, you will discover that the way children view themselves in a group context is primarily a reflection of their self-esteem. Changes in one's view of oneself can occur over time. That self-knowledge is accelerated through the group's interactions. How children feel relating to others has definite implications for the successful functioning of the group. Maslow has said that respect and approval from others, actual achievement, and learning to accept oneself are the three major factors that influence self-esteem. The cooperative setting can positively act upon all three.

In a heterogenous cooperative group, individual differences can be effectively accommodated as special abilities are recognized and encouraged. A variety of responses are allowed, improvisation within the group occurs, everybody is listened to, and every group member has recognized standing. The collaborative and interactive learning opportunities in this book are designed to cope with student diversity and promote an emotionally healthy social environment in which learning from and about others serves also to validate one's self.

THE ROLE OF RULES

In an ideal world, classroom rules would be unnecessary and behavior would always be appropriate. However, whether they are posted on the wall or understood and unspoken, rules are an extremely important part of a well-managed classroom. The rules proposed for your cooperative learning activities serve to reinforce your own management system and clarify appropriate behaviors for group members. The effectiveness of group interaction and the developing interdependence among group members is greatly enhanced when the following rules are routinely discussed and enforced.

- Every person in your group has equal time to be heard.
- Every person in your group is responsible for his/her own behavior.
- Every person in your group must be willing to help any group member who asks.
- If there are questions, check with every person in your group before asking the teacher.

These rules facilitate the development of the cooperative group as a support system. Working in tandem with the varied strategies, the rules promote a greater likelihood of enhancing individual competency as well as group proficiency. As you gain insight into the purposeful structure of the cooperative group, you will also recognize that the skills associated with cooperative learning include the development of empathy for others. For many children, that will be a unique experience. It is not often that we can structure practice in caring and sharing as we improve classroom learning. Since group members bring diverse past experiences to the group, the rules serve also to provide a basis for cultivating a common commitment.

To increase the likelihood of success of all of the cooperative strategies, it is a good idea to frequently go over the rules. Their positive phrasing provides a model so that they may be remembered in positive terms. It doesn't take long for the rules to be remembered, but the enthusiasm which cooperative learning engenders does make for noisier classrooms and reinforces the need to set your own behavioral parameters. Remember, however, that thinking and talking about thinking engages students both emotionally and intellectually and is the basis of effective collaborative work. Inextricably interwoven are the modalities of language - thinking, listening, and communicating. Using arranged environments of carefully structured strategies and rules, teachers can guide interactions to help children acquire a multitude of skills.

THE ROLE OF ROLES

Entire chapters have been written regarding the assigning of roles within cooperative groups. Lengthy discussions have focused on the principle of distributed leadership to ensure that all students learn to contribute as active participants. The literature abounds with labels created for all four group members so that each feels useful.

Often, the concern for the labels and the attempt to understand what the role consists of is so consuming as to undermine the process. What is important to realize is that if the cooperative strategy is well-designed, positions do not need to be contrived in order to involve students. When role assignments are made, they should be on a temporary basis, so that a responsibility does not become onerous or artificial. In classrooms where cooperative skills are emerging and students are becoming more involved in their own learning, cooperative group roles will be fluid and ever changing. For many lessons which you will teach in a cooperative format, there need be no roles specifically defined. In this book, suggestions are made for providing those positions that are seen as necessary, or those which add interest to a specific strategy. You should feel free to adapt roles on an as-needed basis to fit your group and your teaching style.

The roles most often mentioned in the literature include the following: reader, recorder, reporter, observer, encourager, questioner, doer, prober, summarizer, checker, praiser, facilitator, caretaker, timer, monitor, and scribe. There are job descriptions for each of these roles on the next page.

One of the most equitable ways to assign roles is on a rotating basis. When a job is required by one of the activities, suggest that the children number themselves 1 through 4 and that jobs be assigned by number. Using a check-off sheet, you can assure yourself that each group member has varied role responsibilities. Assign tasks by number, saying, "All the number 3's are readers for this activity." In another instance, "If you are a number 4, you are the recorders." In this way, there is accountability and the jobs that are assigned are relevant and meaningful.

It is easy to get bogged down if you worry too much about the names of the roles and overly concern yourself with each student having a formal role each time you use a cooperative learning strategy. Get into the cooperative process, try converting some everyday classroom procedures into a cooperative format (e.g. cooperative groups taking responsibility for attendance, current events reporting, activity planning), so that your students become comfortable with the behaviors. Utilize the list of "Positions Available" to create valid relationships among group members by assigning roles which promote group effectiveness.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

The **READER** assumes responsibility for reading any required information to the group.

The **RECORDER** or **SCRIBE** may do the writing for the group when a group product is required.

The **REPORTER** is designated as the group member who will report the group's conclusions or to the entire class.

The **OBSERVER** evaluates group effectiveness by sitting outside of the group and commenting during a debriefing.

The **ENCOURAGER** invites reluctant participants to become more active.

The **QUESTIONER** may take responsibility for leading the group by asking questions which are part of an activity or may be the one designated to ask the teacher a group question.

The **DOER** may divide a task into its component parts and assign different jobs.

The **PROBER** looks inquiringly at the possibilities. (Hopefully, this will be most children.)

The **SUMMARIZER** may review directions and also conclusions.

The **CHECKER** makes sure that each group member knows the correct responses and understands the information.

The **PRAISER** offers positive comments.

The **FACILITATOR** ensures that everyone in the group is involved and contributes.

The **CARETAKER** keeps a folder of work and assignments for any member of the cooperative group who may be absent.

The **TIMER** keeps an eye on the clock for those assignments with time limits.

The **MONITOR** keeps the group on task.

THE INTEGRATED CURRICULUM AND COOPERATIVE LEARNING

An integrated curriculum is one in which course content crosses subject boundaries. History, and a sense of history, is conveyed through the reading of biographies, autobiographies, and first person accounts. The teaching of geography is enlivened as students read journals of explorers and selections from world literature. Poetry and fiction enrich and explain concepts in science. Fairy tales, folk tales, and myths from around the globe are studied to reveal insights into different cultures, and exemplary literature, both fiction and non-fiction, is read to provide models that demonstrate the power of the written word. Subject matter is taught so that it matters, and connections are made across the curriculum.

The cooperative group is the perfect forum for an integrated curriculum. All curriculum at all levels can merge and emerge with instruction which builds understanding by involving students in their own learning. There are innumerable opportunities to summarize orally, express ideas, relate to personal experience, problem solve aloud, voice opinions, and find relevance when cooperative learning provides the methodology. A vital strength of cooperative learning is that it encourages new thinking. Not "new" in that it has never been discovered, but new because it has been produced by the group's participants. Students construct knowledge and, because it is new, it is their own, and they are validated. During the process of involving themselves so wholly with subject matter, they begin to see themselves as both learners and discoverers.

The strategies and lessons detailed in this book illustrate the diversity of curricular areas which easily adapt to cooperative learning. There simply are no curricular limitations. Great opportunities exist for students to learn skills which are taught in their natural context (e.g. the choral reading of "The Story of Rostevan, King of Arabs," to teach the uses of figurative language, the flow of language, and world literature, as well). The importance of effective communication begins to be understood as students become receptive to learning from one another and more adept at expressing themselves clearly and being active listeners. If the idea is to develop minds that question and problem solve, and to use information instead of just having it, the methodology incorporated in cooperative learning has broad implications. Crossing the disciplines expands perspectives. Together, cooperative learning and the integrated curriculum form a powerful combination.

GUIDANCE AND COOPERATIVE LEARNING

Specific lessons in ***TOGETHER, I CAN*** have been designed to underscore the potential which cooperative learning has in counseling and guidance. Many of the classroom strategies and activities throughout this book are appropriate for use by counselors in small group situations. It is my hope that both teachers and counselors will use any of these ideas and suggestions to help all students.

The task of meeting the emotional needs of the children in our schools is intimidating. Where childhood once was a time of innocence and a time for play, for many children, for many reasons, it is a time of confusion and despair. The counselor's role in prevention and early intervention has become more difficult to perform because crisis situations take up a great deal of time.

Cooperative learning strategies, because they are designed to be easily implemented and adaptable to a variety of materials, offer solutions to counselors who want effective and meaningful lessons which can be tailored to fit the situations they encounter. Once the strategies become familiar, they are an ideal means for interacting with a classroom of students in a preventive mode, and with small groups of students in early intervention situations. With student support groups, there are several cooperative strategies which provide structure for the support process. Group counseling situations are generally based on discussion, the core of collaborative work. Cooperative strategies can be utilized for sharing feelings, problem solving, social and communication skills, stress management, coping with emotions, goal setting, and decision making.

The lessons which are focused on topics traditionally germane to guidance will be found side-by-side with those which focus on specific content areas. This is because neither is mutually exclusive. As you become conversant with the varied strategies, their potential uses will convince you to add cooperative activities to your repertoire. The examples are intended to spark ideas of your own, they are not intended to be a complete counseling curriculum. They have been devised to allow students to talk about their ideas and to verbalize their concerns and feelings.

The use of literature provides a backdrop both for engaging students and encouraging participation. There are many books which can be used effectively for a variety of purposes, and those purposes are described in each lesson. As you become familiar with the excellent children's literature available, you will discover a multitude of ways to use storytelling in combination with cooperative learning in a counseling situation.

The combined use of Sharing Circles and cooperative learning, as outlined in "A Vision for the Future: From Cooperative Groups to Sharing Circles." gives a rationale for sustaining nurturing and trust within the classroom. Expanding the role of cooperative learning beyond the classroom and into the realm of counseling and guidance may well be a part of the vision. Certainly, in a school where developing a sense of community is a prime objective, the intellectual, emotional, and psychological needs of children can be more easily met.

FROM COOPERATIVE GROUPS TO SHARING CIRCLES

DEVELOPING A SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Dedicated teachers have always had a vision. Our classrooms were never simply places to work. Our dream was much bigger. We intuitively discovered ways to nurture and inspire. We looked for ways to build rapport and trust, knowing how much more could be taught in an emotionally healthy environment. We learned from experience that focusing on the affective realm had direct impact on cognitive processing.

The best teaching takes into account that both thinking and feeling are interrelated. A great deal of research substantiates the fact that the biological thinking function of the brain, when balanced by affective components, has greater efficiency and success. Teachers who laugh with their students have realized that classrooms in which humor is welcome are wonderfully relaxing places to learn (and to teach). Anxiety inhibits learning. Classrooms in which small groups have planned opportunities to work together are places where the anxiety of individual students is greatly diminished. Classrooms in which feelings are validated and allowed expression are places where self-actualization is furthered. There is no longer a question as to whether academic performance and self-esteem are related, a multitude of studies have proven correlation. Because emotional needs frequently take precedence over school needs, the way students see themselves and their relationship to others can positively or negatively influence their school performance.

Because it is relationships within (and outside) classrooms which create a sense of community and emotional well-being, this section proposes to offer a planned sequence designed to structure the development of trust and the nourishing of rapport while, at the same time, giving a feeling of purpose and direction which will directly affect achievement. Teachers committed to maximizing learning and helping children find school relevant and enjoyable will enjoy great success with the cooperative learning strategies in this book. Those teachers may also wish to pursue the following suggested options.

The combination of two instructional methodologies are proposed to further a sense of community in the classroom. In this combined program, social and academic skills are comprehensively addressed affectively and cognitively. Also infused are the neurobiological findings which support an integrative approach to learning - one which incorporates the thinking, feeling, physical sensing, and intuition functions of the brain. The theoretical bases for integrative learning translate with relative ease when it is recognized that the two methods complement one another to an astounding degree.

This innovative classroom alliance combines Sharing Circles with cooperative learning. It is a natural and symbiotic combination that brings children together in an affective setting, leads them into cognitive awareness, and then invites them to return to the cooperative groups which reinforce the growth of self-awareness as well as the sense of community. Knowledge is acquired throughout as the classroom environment supports and maintains individual and group initiative. The finest programs in education are often composites, such as this one. The author suggests that the cooperative learning model described in this book be used in conjunction with the Sharing Circle model described in detail in *Prime Time*, *Creating Success!*, or *The Best Self-Esteem Activities*, all published by Innerchoice Publishing.

The Sharing Circle format invites a small group of children (eight would be ideal since it would involve two complete cooperative groups), into a uniquely structured discussion group. Central to the circle is a topic of discussion about which every child has an opportunity to speak. Sharing Circles have rules and procedures which encourage the development of listening skills and the sharing of feelings. This safe and welcoming environment promotes acceptance and respect. So the day begins with the Sharing Circle establishing an affective base of rapport and trust. It sets the emotional tone for moving into cooperative learning groups. The transfer of affective experiences and subsequent cognitive awareness to the cooperative learning group maintains and reinforces the sense of community desired.

Learning is heightened when a topic is introduced in a circle in the morning, thematically transferred to add interest to cooperative group activities, and processed again in the Sharing Circle at the end of the day. Experientially, meaning for students is intensified when the focus is concrete, visceral, and viewed from a variety of perspectives.

LEADING SHARING CIRCLES

The following information provides a thorough guide for conducting Sharing Circles. It covers major points to keep in mind and answers questions which will arise as you begin using Sharing Circles as a part of your cooperative learning program. Please remember that these guidelines are presented to assist you, not to restrict you. Follow them and trust your own leadership style at the same time.

Sharing Circle Procedures

1. Setting up the circle (1-2 minutes)
2. Reviewing the ground rules (1-2 minutes)—optional
3. Introducing the topic (1-2 minutes)
4. Sharing by circle members (12-18 minutes)
5. Reviewing what is shared (3-5 minutes)—optional
6. Summary discussion (2-8 minutes)
7. Closing the circle (less than 1 minute)

Setting up the circle (1-2 minutes)

As you sit down with the children in the circle, remember that you are not teaching a lesson. You are facilitating a group of people. Establish a positive atmosphere. In a relaxed manner, address each child by name, using eye contact and conveying warmth. An attitude of seriousness blended with enthusiasm will let the children know that the Sharing Circle is an important learning experience—an activity that can be interesting and meaningful.

Reviewing the ground rules (1-2 minutes)

At the beginning of the first session, and at appropriate intervals thereafter, go over the ground rules for the Sharing Circle. They are:

Sharing Circle Rules

1. Bring yourself to the circle and nothing else.
2. Everyone gets a turn to share, including the leader.
3. You can skip your turn if you wish.
4. Listen to the person who is sharing.
5. The time is shared equally.
6. Stay in your own space.
7. There are no interruptions, probing, put-downs, or gossip.

From this point on, demonstrate to the children that you expect them to remember and abide by the ground rules. Convey that you think well of them and know they are fully capable of responsible behavior. Let them know that by coming to the session they are making a commitment to listen and show acceptance and respect for the other children and you.

Introducing the topic (1-2 minutes)

State the topic in your own words. Elaborate and provide examples as each activity suggests. Add clarifying statements of your own that will help the children understand the topic. Answer questions about the topic, and emphasize that there are no "right" responses. Finally, restate the topic, opening the session to responses (theirs and yours). Sometimes taking your turn first helps the children understand the aim of the topic. At various points throughout the session, state the topic again.

Just prior to leading a Sharing Circle, contemplate the topic and think of at least one possible response that *you* can make to it.

Sharing by circle members (12-18 minutes)

The most important point to remember is this: The purpose of the Sharing Circle is to give children an opportunity to express themselves and be accepted for the experiences, thoughts, and feelings they share. Avoid taking the action away from the circle members. They are the stars!

Reviewing what is shared (optional 3-5 minutes)

Besides modeling effective listening (the very best way to teach it) and positively reinforcing children for attentive listening, a review can be used to deliberately improve listening skills in circle members.

Reviewing is a time for reflective listening, when circle members feed back what they heard each other say during the sharing phase of the circle. Besides encouraging effective listening, reviewing provides circle members with additional recognition. It validates their experience and conveys the idea, "you are important," a message we can all profit from hearing often.

To review, a circle member simply addresses someone who shared, and briefly paraphrases what the person said ("John, I heard you say....").

The first few times you conduct reviews, stress the importance of checking with the speaker to see if the review accurately summarized the main things that were shared. If the speaker says, "No," allow him/her to make corrections. Stress too, the importance of speaking *directly* to the speaker, using the person's name and the pronoun "you," not "he" or "she." If someone says, "S/he said that...," intervene as promptly and respectfully as possible and say to the reviewer, "Talk to Betty...Say you." This is very important. The person whose turn is being reviewed will have a totally different feeling when talked *to*, instead of *about*.

Note: Remember that the review is optional and is most effective when used *occasionally*, not as a part of every circle.

Summary discussion (2-8 minutes)

The summary discussion is the cognitive portion of the Sharing Circle. During this phase, the leader asks thought-provoking questions to stimulate free discussion and higher-level thinking. Each Sharing Circle in the book includes three or more summary questions; however, at times you may want to formulate questions that are more appropriate to the level of understanding in your group—or to what was actually shared in the circle. If you wish to make connections between the Sharing Circle topic and a particular subject area, ask questions that will accomplish that objective and allow the summary discussion to extend longer.

It is important that you not confuse the summary with the review. The review is optional; the summary is not. The summary meets the need of people of all ages to find meaning in what they do. Thus, the summary serves as a necessary culmination to each Sharing Circle by allowing the children to clarify the key concepts they gained from the session.

Closing the circle (less than 1 minute)

The ideal time to end a Sharing Circle is when the summary discussion reaches natural closure. Sincerely thank everyone for being part of the circle. Don't thank specific students for speaking, as doing so might convey the impression that speaking is more appreciated than mere listening. Then close the circle by saying, "The Sharing Circle is over," or "Okay, that ends our session."

More about Sharing Circle Procedures and Rules

The next few paragraphs offer further clarification concerning Sharing Circle leadership.

Why should students bring themselves to the circle and nothing else? Individual teachers differ on this point, but most prefer that children not bring objects (such as pencils, books, etc.) to the circle that may be distracting.

Who gets to talk? Everyone. The importance of acceptance cannot be overly stressed. In one way or another, practically every ground rule says one thing: *accept one another*. When you model acceptance of students, they will learn how to be accepting. Each individual in the circle is important and deserves a turn to speak if s/he wishes to take it. Equal opportunity to become involved should be given to everyone in the circle.

Circle members should be reinforced equally for their contributions. There are many reasons why a leader may become more enthused over what one child shares than another. The response may be more on target, reflect more depth, be more entertaining, be philosophically more in keeping with one's own point of view, and so on. However, children need to be given equal recognition for their contributions, even if the contribution is to listen silently throughout the session.

In most of the Sharing Circles, plan to take a turn and address the topic, too. Students usually appreciate it very much and learn a great deal when their teachers and counselors are willing to tell about their own experiences, thoughts, and feelings. In this way you let your students know that you acknowledge your own humanness.

Does everyone have to take a turn? No. Students may choose to skip their turns. If the circle becomes a pressure situation in which the members are coerced in any way to speak, it will become an unsafe place where participants are not comfortable. Meaningful discussion is unlikely in such an atmosphere. By allowing students to make this choice, you are showing them that you accept their right to remain silent if that is what they choose to do.

As you begin circles, it will be to your advantage if one or more children decline to speak. If you are imperturbable and accepting when this happens, you let them know you are offering them an opportunity to experience something you think is valuable, or at least worth a try, and not attempting to force-feed them. You as a leader should not feel compelled to share a personal experience in every session, either. However, if you decline to speak in most of the sessions, this may have an inhibiting effect on the child's willingness to share.

A word should also be said about how this ground rule has sometimes been carried to extremes. Sometimes leaders have bent over backwards to let children know they don't have to take a turn. This seeming lack of enthusiasm on the part of the leader has caused reticence in the children. In order to avoid this outcome, don't project any personal insecurity as you lead the session. Be confident in your proven ability to work with children. Expect something to happen and it will.

Some circle leaders ask the participants to raise their hands when they wish to speak, while others simply allow free verbal sharing without soliciting the leader's permission first. Choose the procedure that works best for you, but do not call on anyone unless you can see signs of readiness.

Some leaders have reported that their first circles fell flat—that no one, or just one or two children, had anything to say. But they continued to have circles, and at a certain point everything changed. Thereafter, the children had a great deal to say that these leaders considered worth waiting for. It appears that in these cases the leaders' acceptance of the right to skip turns was a key factor. In time most children will contribute verbally when they have something they want to say, and when they are assured there is no pressure to do so.

Sometimes a silence occurs during a Sharing Circle. Don't feel you have to jump in every time someone stops talking. During silences children have an opportunity to think about what they would like to share or to contemplate an important idea they've heard. A general rule of thumb is to allow silence to the point that you observe group discomfort. At that point move on. *Do not switch to another topic.* To do so implies you will not be satisfied until the children speak. If you change to another topic, you are telling them you didn't really mean it when you said they didn't have to take a turn if they didn't want to.

If you are bothered about children who attend a number of circles and still do not share verbally, reevaluate what you consider to be involvement. Participation does not necessarily mean talking. Students who do not speak *are* listening and learning.

How can I encourage effective listening? The Sharing Circle is a time (and place) for students and leaders to strengthen the habit of listening by doing it over and over again. No one was born knowing how to listen effectively to others. It is a skill like any other that gets better as it is practiced. In the immediacy of the Sharing Circle, the members become keenly aware of the necessity to listen, and most children respond by expecting it of one another.

Listening is defined as the respectful focusing of attention on individual speakers. It includes eye contact with the speaker and open body posture. It eschews interruptions of any kind. When you conduct a Sharing Circle, listen and encourage listening in the children by (l) focusing your attention on the person who is speaking, (2) being receptive to what the speaker is saying (not mentally planning your next remark), and (3) recognizing the speaker when s/he finishes speaking, either verbally ("Thanks, John") or nonverbally (a nod and a smile).

To encourage effective listening in the children, reinforce them by letting them know you have noticed they were listening to each other and you appreciate it. Occasionally conducting a review after the sharing phase also has the effect of sharpening listening skills.

How can I ensure the students get equal time? When circle members share the time equally, they demonstrate their acceptance of the notion that everyone's contribution is of equal importance. It is not uncommon to have at least one dominator in a group. This person is usually totally unaware that by continuing to talk s/he is taking time from others who are less assertive.

Be very clear with the children about the purpose of this ground rule. Tell them at the outset how much time there is and whether or not you plan to conduct a review. When it is your turn, always limit your own contribution. If someone goes on and on, do intervene (dominators need to know what they are doing), but do so as gently and respectfully as you can.

What are some examples of put-downs? Put-downs convey the message, "You are not okay as you are." Some put-downs are deliberate, but many are made unknowingly. Both kinds are undesirable in a Sharing Circle because they destroy the atmosphere of acceptance and disrupt the flow of discussion. Typical put-downs include:

- over questioning.
- statements that have the effect of teaching or preaching
- advice giving
- one-upsmanship
- criticism, disapproval, or objections
- sarcasm
- statements or questions of disbelief

How can I deal with put-downs? There are two major ways for dealing with put-downs in Sharing Circles: preventing them from occurring and intervening when they do.

Going over the ground rules with the children at the beginning of each session, particularly in the earliest sessions, is a helpful preventive technique. Another is to reinforce the children when they adhere to the rule. Be sure to use non-patronizing, non-evaluative language.

Unacceptable behavior should be stopped the moment it is recognized by the leader. When you become aware that a put-down is occurring, do whatever you ordinarily do to stop destructive behavior in the classroom. If one child gives another an unasked-for bit of advice, say for example, "Jenny, please give Alicia a chance to tell her story." To a child who interrupts say, "Carlos, it's Brecken's turn." In most cases the fewer words, the better—children automatically tune out messages delivered as lectures.

Sometimes children disrupt the group by starting a private conversation with the person next to them. Touch the offender on the arm or shoulder while continuing to give eye contact to the child who is speaking. If you can't reach the offender, simply remind him/her of the rule about listening. If children persist in putting others down during Sharing Circles, ask to see them at another time and hold a brief one-to-one conference, urging them to follow the rules. Suggest that they reconsider their membership in the circle. Make it clear that if they don't intend to honor the ground rules, they are not to come to the circle.

How can I keep students from gossiping? Periodically remind students that using names and sharing embarrassing information is not acceptable. Urge the children to relate personally to one another, but not to tell intimate details of their lives.

What should the leader do during the summary discussion? Conduct the summary as an open forum, giving students the opportunity to discuss a variety of ideas and accept those that make sense to them. Don't impose your opinions on the children, or allow the children to impose theirs on one another. Ask open-ended questions, encourage higher-level thinking, contribute your own ideas when appropriate, and act as a facilitator.

Training Student Leaders

Once your children have participated in several Sharing Circles, understand the process, and cooperate in following the rules, you will most likely want to develop students as leaders. There is great value in students leading their own circles. In addition to developing leadership skills, it also allows the entire class to be participating in circles simultaneously. It frees you from only working with one small circle group at a time. You now have the option of overseeing the entire class and being available where needed.

By combining two cooperative groups into one Sharing Circle you have the ideal number of eight students in each circle. You can begin training student leaders by asking for a volunteer from each Sharing Circle . Before they actually lead the circle, do some coaching with each leader. Provide the student leaders with a copy of the steps for leading a Sharing Circle or make a large poster or write the steps on the board. Review the steps and ask questions that will help each leader focus on and understand the steps. Next, tell the student leaders what the topic will be and discuss it with them. You may want to give them some ideas on how to elaborate on the topic.

Before turning the session over to the student leaders, add one more thing—a new ground rule stating that the children are expected to respect fully the leadership position of the student. **If they disagree with the student leader's procedure or are aware of what s/he should do next when the student leader may have forgotten, they are not to say anything at that time unless they are asked to by the student leader.** When people are learning a new skill, it can be very upsetting to have other people constantly reminding them of what they are supposed to do next. For this reason the student leader should not be heckled in any way. (Time can be taken at the end of the session for the group to give feedback to the student leader about his/her performance).

Now, allow the student leaders to proceed. If you are participating in a circle, be sure to take your turn and model respectful listening. As necessary, deal with children who interrupt or distract the groups.

Before ending the session, thank the student leaders, and conduct a brief feedback session by asking the children, "Who would like to tell (your student leader) what you liked about the way she or he conducted the session?" Let the student leaders call on each person in their circles who has a comment.

Tell the children the topic you have in mind for the next session, and ask for a new volunteer to lead it. Remember that students should not lead the group until they feel ready and you are sure they will be successful. Students should never be forced to lead.

HOW TO INTEGRATE SHARING CIRCLES AND COOPERATIVE LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The bonding which takes place among the participants of a Sharing Circle can transfer to cooperative group work, adding to the effectiveness of the group. With that in mind, Sharing Circles can be initiated with eight children, the eight separating into two cooperative groups at the close of circle sessions. The six illustrative scenarios which follow are simply suggestions for the progression from circle to cooperative group and back to circle. Each is designed to utilize the circle format for the "into" or motivating activities. Followed by the cooperative group work in one of the content areas, the circle would, at the end of the day, provide cognitive closure. Meaningful involvement, affective and cognitive, thus permeate academics.

Conduct the Sharing Circle, "Something I like About My Friend Who is Different." When the Sharing Circle is concluded, read the story *Old Henry*, by Joan W. Blos (New York, Mulberry Books) to the entire class. Ask the children to return to their cooperative groups and brainstorm quietly the many ways Old Henry was different from his neighbors. On your chalkboard, copy the letter Old Henry wrote to the mayor. Have your groups compose a response from the mayor to Old Henry. Each group should work together on that letter. Allow time for all the letters to be shared with the entire group. At the end of the day, the Sharing Circle topic would relate directly to the days activities, "Something I Would Do to Be a Friend to Old Henry."

Conduct the Sharing Circle, "An Activity I Enjoy with Friends." When the Sharing Circle is concluded, read a book such as *Chester's Way*, by Kevin Hankes (New York, Puffin Books). Chester and his friend, Wilson, love to play croquet and eat peanut butter sandwiches. They are "two of a kind" (both mice, as well) and inseparable. The book details the changes that occur in their lives when Lily moves into the neighborhood., As they gain a new friend, this book offers some important learnings. Have your children work in their groups listing the activities they enjoy with their friends, and then invite them to use the strategy **PYRAMID** to create a summary of the book. Back in the Sharing Circle at the end of the day, the discussion topic could easily be, "What I've Learned From My Friends."

Conduct the Sharing Circle, "A Time I Felt Unhappy." When the Sharing Circle is concluded, the book *I'll Always Love You*, by Hans Wilhelm (New York, Crown Publishers, Inc.) tells about a young boy who finds comfort after his dog's death by remembering that he'd always told Elfie every night, "I'll always love you." Children often go through the pain of losing a pet and grieving and the story, in very simple terms, delivers a message of solace. Using the cooperative strategy **SHAREAROUND**, children may tell one another their own "sad" stories and what finally made them feel better. Individual stories or journal entries may be written about this topic, and the circle at the end of the day should focus on "What Finally Made Me Feel Better."

Conduct the Sharing Circle, "How Someone Else's Decision Affected Me." There are a number of shorter stories which would serve to illustrate this topic for cooperative group follow-up work, but *The War With Grandpa*, by Robert Kimmel Smith (New York, Dell Publishing), read over several days provides an excellent basis for group discussion of decisions and consequences. (This book is appropriate for grades 4-6 and is available in paper back). The author's sense of humor and ability to write from a fifth-grade boy's perspective creates chapter-by-chapter interest and opportunity for cooperative group work.. The **FOUR SENTENCE SUMMARY** strategy could be used at intervals, but a group product labeled "Decision and Consequences" could be ongoing as the story is read and far more valuable as an educational activity. Sharing Circle topics throughout this time could vary, but still relate.

Occasionally, it is beneficial to make the "literature connection" prior to conducting the Sharing Circle. Jean Little's book, *Different Dragons*, (Canada, Puffin Books), tells the story of Ben, afraid of dogs, thunderstorms and new places. Appropriate for grades 4-6, it can be read aloud within a few days. Sharing Circle topics, such as "A Time I Felt Scared," are perfect follow-up themes for this book. Other themes which would have relevance would focus on overcoming fears, meeting challenges, and thinking about consequences. The idiomatic expression, "Everyone has different dragons to slay..." which gave the book its title could give rise to a study of idioms as well. Cooperative groups could involve themselves in an idioms "search."

Often, a Sharing Circle topic initiates a host of ideas which result in "projects." The Sharing Circle topic, "Something I Like About Myself," is one of those topics. Many children are unable to talk about themselves in a positive fashion, don't know the words to describe character traits, and feel reluctant to praise themselves in front of others. Frequently, the descriptive words available to a child are those defining physical characteristics rather than inner qualities. The use of outstanding children's literature provides a vehicle to help children understand the meaning of such words as courage, perseverance, responsibility, determination, and the value of imagination, sense of humor and perspective.

One such book, *Save Queen of Sheba*, by Louise Moeri (New York, Avon Books) describes the courage of a twelve-year-old boy, as he and his little sister, survivors of a Sioux raiding party, struggle to find their parents from whom they've become separated. Cooperative group work, prior to reading the book, would involve brainstorming the meaning of the word "courage," giving examples, and assigning groups to list, in order of importance, what they would do in a situation such as the one described. Sharing Circles progress from "Something I Like About Myself" to "A Time I Showed Courage," or "A Time I Was Determined." The choice of literature becomes the means of selecting and creating topics.

The progression and intricate interweaving of skills and activities which comes with the blending of Sharing Circles and cooperative learning is unique. The pervasiveness of mood, feeling tone, subject matter and theme fuse the academic and non-academic. Collaborative activities facilitate problem solving and creativity, competencies which generate success experiences. That, in combination with the incremental development of the ability to identify, accept, and express one's feelings, promises the realization of the vision.

The six sample Sharing Circles included here are intended to launch your own thinking. Topics frequently found in literature which provide a "connection" to Sharing Circles include feelings, being special and unique, decision-making and consequences, friendship, self-acceptance and self-identity, self-confidence and effort, happiness, anger, making good choices, behavior, addressing fears and worries, imagination and dreams, goal-setting, resolving conflicts, conflict in families and between friends, problem solving, good listening and communication, responsibility, peer pressure, advertising and media influence, stress and coping skills, positive thinking and self-talk.

SOMETHING I LIKE ABOUT MY FRIEND WHO IS DIFFERENT

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

Review the Sharing Circle rules as necessary.

State the topic. Say to the children: *Today, we are going to talk about a friend who is different from us and what we like about him or her. The topic for this Sharing Circle is "Something I Like About My Friend Who Is Different."*

We are all alike and different in many ways. Today I want you to think about a friend who is different from you in at least one way—and why you like this person so much. Your friend might have a different size family than you, or be older than you. Does your friend speak a different language or eat different foods than you? Maybe your friend celebrates birthdays in a different way than you do, or has different holidays. What makes you like your friend so much? Does he or she play with you or share things with you? Invite you to birthday celebrations? Sit down and read with you? Think about it for a few minutes. The topic is, "Something I Like About My Friend Who Is Different."

If necessary, give additional examples of differences in physical appearance, culture, or ability.

Involve the children in sharing.

Summary:

When everyone who chooses to speak has done so, conduct a brief summary by asking open-ended questions, such as these:

In what ways are we different from our friends?

Why do we like our friends even though they are different from us?

Why is it helpful for us to remember what we like about our friends?

Conclude the Sharing Circle.

An Activity I Enjoy with Friends

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

Review the Sharing Circle rules as necessary.

State the topic. In your own words, say to the children: *Today's topic is, "An Activity I Enjoy with Friends." We all enjoy doing things with our friends. What do you particularly like to do? Maybe you enjoy playing a sport or working on model planes or cars. Perhaps you like to go to the shopping mall with your friends, or watch television. Do you and your friends play video games, or go bicycling or skating? Do you build things out of odds and ends, LEGOS, building blocks, or logs? Do you make up plays and act in them? Whatever it is you most enjoy doing with your friends, please tell us about it. I'll give you a few moments to decide. When you are ready, raise your hand. The topic is, "An Activity I Enjoy Doing with Friends."*

Involve the children in sharing.

Summary:

Give the children an opportunity to talk about what they learned in the circle. Use these and other open-ended questions to generate discussion:

What kinds of things did most of us enjoy doing with our friends?

Why do we often do different things with different friends?

Who usually decides what you and your friends are going to do? What do you do when you disagree?

Do you think any of the things you do with your friends could develop into careers? Which ones?

Conclude the Sharing Circle.

A Time I Felt Unhappy

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

Review the Sharing Circle rules as necessary.

State the topic. In your own words, tell the children *In our last Sharing Circle, we talked about times we felt happy. We learned that in some places, like the Sharing Circle, it's all right for us to tell each other about our feelings. And today we are going to do that again. Our topic for today is, "A Time I Felt Unhappy."*

Everybody feels happy at times and everybody feels unhappy at other times. It's more fun for most people to tell about happy feelings, but sometimes it does us good to talk about unhappy feelings as well. Can you remember a time when you felt unhappy? Maybe you had an accident and got hurt, or perhaps you wanted something and you didn't get it so you were disappointed. If you would like to take a turn, tell us what made you unhappy and what the feeling was like for you. Take a moment to think about it and raise your hand when you are ready. The topic is, "A Time I Felt Unhappy."

Involve the children in sharing.

Summary:

Here are two questions to ask the children. Use them to generate a free flowing discussion of what was learned during the circle.

What did we do in this Sharing Circle?

Why is it good for us to tell one another about times we felt unhappy?

Conclude the Sharing Circle.

How Someone Else's Decision Affected Me

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

Review the Sharing Circle rules as necessary.

State the topic. Say to the children: *We all make decisions every day. For instance, we decide what to wear and eat, how to act, what to do, and what to say. Many times, the decisions we make affect other people. At the same time, other people are making decisions too—and the decisions they make sometimes affect us. That is what we are going to talk about today. Our topic is, "How Someone Else's Decision Affected Me."*

Think of a decision that another person made that somehow affected you. Maybe someone in your family decided to bring ice cream home one night, and you were happy because you got to eat some of it. That decision had a good affect on you. On the other hand, maybe you have a friend whose family decided to move to another town and now you can't play with your friend anymore. That decision had a bad affect on you. Perhaps your older brother or sister decided to get a paper route, and now you spend a lot of time helping him or her fold papers. Or maybe your mother decided to work late at her office one evening, and you got very hungry waiting for her to come home and fix dinner. My decision to have a Sharing Circle today was just a little one, but it affected you because you are a member of the circle! When you tell us about the decision, be sure to describe how it affected you and how you felt about it. Think quietly for a moment or two, and raise your hand when you are ready. The topic is, "How Someone Else's Decision Affected Me."

Involve the children in sharing.

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Summary:

Ask these and other questions to generate a discussion:

What were some of the decisions that other people made that affected us?

How did they affect us?

Why do the decisions we make so often affect other people?

Has anyone ever asked you to help make a decision because you would probably be affected by it? How did you feel about that?

Would you like to help make decisions more often?

How do you make decisions?

Conclude the Sharing Circle.

A Time I Felt Scared

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

Review the Sharing Circle rules as necessary.

State the topic. Say: *Everyone feels scared from time to time and no one likes the feeling. Today, we are going to talk about feeling afraid. The topic is, "A Time I Felt Scared."*

Can you think of a time that you were afraid? What happened to cause your fear? Were you lost? Were you around a lot of people that you didn't know? Was it the first day of school? Perhaps you felt afraid the first time you tried to swim in a pool or the ocean. Chances are there is something that makes you feel scared even now. Are you afraid of the dark? Do big dogs frighten you? Maybe you feel scared when Mommy and Daddy have an argument and yell. Close your eyes and think of one time when you felt afraid. When you look up, I'll know that you are ready to begin the Sharing Circle. The topic is, "A Time I Felt Scared."

Involve the children in sharing.

Summary:

Ask a few open-ended questions to help the children understand their thoughts about fear. For example:

How do we feel inside when we feel scared?

What do we do sometimes when we are afraid?

Why is it important to talk about our fears?

How can we help each other handle our fears?

Conclude the Sharing Circle.

Something I Like About Myself

Subject Area: Language Arts

Review the Sharing Circle rules as necessary.

State the topic. In your own words, say to the students: *Our topic for this circle is, "Something I Like About Myself." Often, we see things in ourselves that we don't like. So let's turn that around and think positively about ourselves. What is there about being you that you especially like? Your hair color? Your height? Your voice? Maybe you like the way you laugh or how gentle you are with animals. Can you read, shoot baskets, or draw well? Think about it silently for a minute before sharing. The topic is, "Something I Like About Myself."*

Involve the students. Invite each person to take a turn speaking while everyone else listens carefully, without interrupting. Be sure to take a turn yourself.

After everyone who wishes to has shared, ask some of the following questions or others that you may think of:

> *Were we able to think of things that we like about ourselves? How were those things alike or different?*
>
> *Why is it important to look at ourselves in positive ways?*
>
> *How do the things you do well contribute to your uniqueness?*

Conclude the Sharing Circle.

TEAMBUILDING

KEEP IT SIMPLE

The feeling of comradeship which pervades successful teams is also necessary to the success of cooperative learning groups. Having said that however, it is important to note that team spirit evolves as teams perform, and its evolution is the result of the experiences the team has together. In the classroom, as on a playing field, it is practice, practice, practice which bonds students into effective teams.

Fortunately, there are a variety of activities which easily translate into practice sessions. Many of these activities are of the same type you've seen which have been used to stimulate creative thinking. Typical of these tasks are those that ask students to think of unusual uses for objects or to make lists. A sampling of those activities are included in the section "Clown Around" which follows. Their purpose is to initiate team spirit. If your students have never been grouped heterogeneously into small groups and have had few experiences working cooperatively toward a common goal, these programmed activities introduce positive interdependence experientially. These activities are equally valuable in classrooms in which students know one another quite well and in situations where students are meeting for the first time. However, when a team is initially formed, the strangeness can be alleviated by involving them in some common effort as soon as possible.

As you embark on this journey, remember that there are a number of commercial materials available (board games for four players, puzzles, and word games) which can easily be adapted for the purpose of reinforcing esprit de corps and bonding. In addition, group solutions to crossword puzzles, logic problems, and analogies are other effective ways of promoting bonding. Creating a poem using group members' names or a poster naming the group is one more bonding activity. A collage created to symbolize the group serves the same purpose and is also an effective teambuilding activity.

Since the purpose of cooperative learning is to effectively incorporate the teaching of content material, the skills of communication and the reality of problem solving through teamwork, it is important that these practice activities be used for readiness, reinforcement, or sponge activities (short, meaningful learning exercises designed to fill time gaps or transition periods) and not remain the sole experience you have with cooperative learning.

Once teambuilding begins and you regularly integrate cooperative learning strategies into your classroom, the collaborative work itself reinforces team bonding. Meaningful academic work, focusing on group solution-finding, will generate true collaboration.

To move into the reality of cooperative learning, choose a strategy such as "Take a Number" and use it during the day for reviewing simple facts related to a social studies unit. Use the same strategy on the following day as groups work collaboratively to solve logic problems. On a consecutive day, use the identical strategy in language arts for identifying parts of speech. Each time a strategy is used, try it in a different curricular area. The strategies can be moved through the subject areas as you build in opportunities to help your students practice collaborative work. It must be reiterated however, that the cooperative activities which involve subject matter learning are themselves teambuilding, so move into them as quickly as you can.

Before concluding this section on teambuilding, the relationship between sharing circles and cooperative learning groups must be reexamined. Great numbers of teachers who have conducted sharing circles in their classrooms report that the sense of community developed within the circles transfers naturally to all the activities in their classrooms. The bonding, trust, and communication skills which evolve are exactly those desired in cooperative group work. There is no question but that in combination, sharing circles in conjunction with cooperative groups, we can greatly further our efforts toward building effective teams of students whose collaborative efforts benefit one another and, ultimately, themselves.

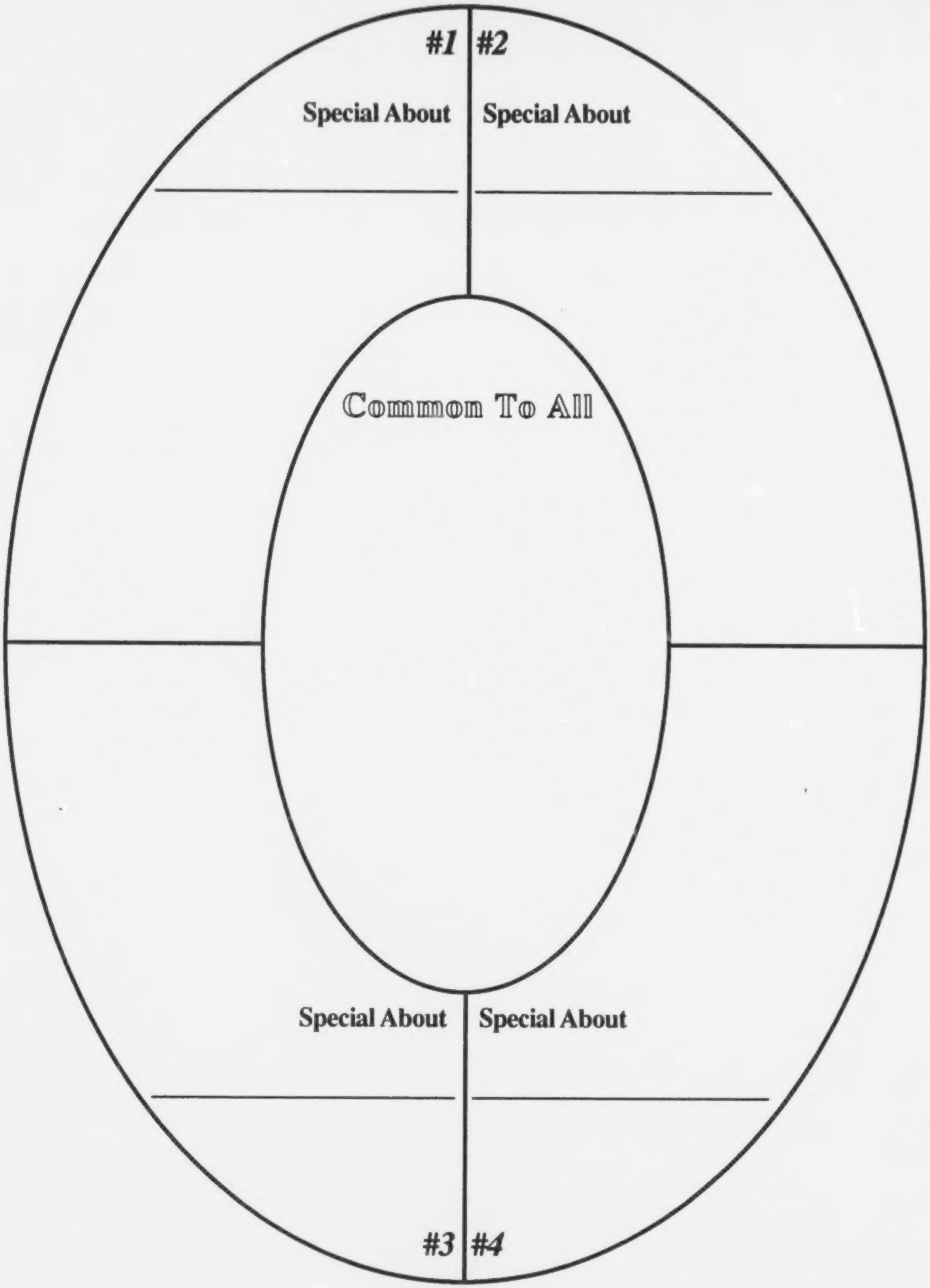
COMMON TO ALL

DIRECTIONS

This teambuilding activity is especially effective when team members meet or begin to work together for the first time. Each group shares one handout, and someone in the group acts as recorder. Member's names are written on the lines and the number in the quadrant becomes their number for any further activities. You may wish to assign the recorder's job to one of the numbers on the handout.

After allowing a few minutes to think about what is special about them as individuals, each group member, in numerical order, relates those qualities or characteristics to the recorder who jots them down in the appropriate quadrant. After the group has completed the individual quadrants, they brainstorm the possibilities for "common to all" characteristics, behaviors, experiences, and/or backgrounds.

This is a quick way for participants to get to know one another and some immediate bonding occurs as a result of the next step. Ask a representative from each group (by calling one of the numbers) to stand and report to the entire group what was held in common.


#1
#2
Special About
Special About
Common To All
Special About
Special About
#3
#4

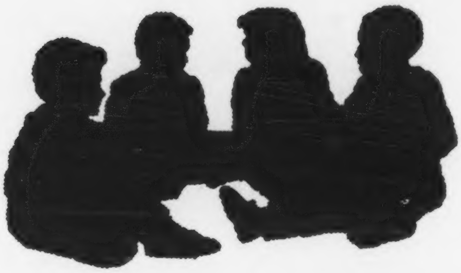
CLOWN AROUND

The following ideas are simply ways of getting students to work together as a team. Many are paper and pencil activities with one pencil and one sheet of paper passed around, eliciting one response at a time from each group member as it is passed. Only one or two of the ideas should be used on any occasion and allotting only five to ten minutes to most of them will add interest. You should remain in control of the time parameters so that the game itself does not overshadow the teambuilding purpose.

The sense of ownership which each cooperative group feels toward their group effort is an integral factor in teambuilding. To capitalize on that group sense of ownership, time should be allowed for the sharing of "favorite" group responses. A representative from each group might choose three or four of the group's most original responses to verbally share with the entire class.

The following suggestions are just a few of the possibilities:

- Make a list of all the things you can think of that make noise.
- Write as many compound words as you can think of.
- Write a sentence for each letter of the alphabet where all words begin with that letter.
- Make a list of things you hate to do.
- Make a list of your favorite things to do.
- Brainstorm uses for a muffin tin.
- Name twenty things which are round and can be thrown long distances.
- Think of unusual uses for a bucket.
- List objects which are red.
- Name ice cream flavors.
- Invent ice cream flavors.
- List things you would be unable to do if you couldn't read?
- Create new school rules.
- List situations when a smile is a good idea.
- List situations when a smile is not a good idea.
- When have you been at the right place at the right time?
- How many uses can you think of for a paper plate.
- What could you do that you can't do now, if you had wings?
- List reasons for not going to school.
- List reasons for going to school.
- How would life be different if there were no clocks?
- List dog breeds, cars, flowers, movie titles, cartoon characters, etc.



SHAREAROUND

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

In many traditional classrooms, it is possible for a child to come to school and never have an opportunity to be the center of attention. This strategy amplifies the role of the cooperative group, placing it in a support position as group members give one another short periods of uninterrupted time to be listened to as they verbally share with the group an idea or information.

SHAREAROUND is a strategy in which each group member, in numerical order, is offered a turn to summarize, read aloud, state ideas, or relate personal feelings. Because each child automatically "gets a turn," emotional needs are met, communication skills are developed, and a sense of connectedness to other group members is enhanced. The uses of this strategy within the cooperative group include: reading text information by paragraph, reading directions, reading aloud from one's own writing, reading each other's writing, reading aloud for pleasure, practicing oral reporting, commenting on a class activity, and responding to varied types of input or feedback.

Because the relationship between speaking and listening skills and reading and writing abilities is integral to academic performance and personal growth, **SHAREAROUND** provides opportunities to integrate them in a cooperative strategy. It promotes an anxiety-free group environment in which each student has built-in opportunities to "share."

Research demonstrates that an individual's performance improves when certain skills and attributes are developed. Listening, oral communication, trusting, and empathy are but a few of those skills and attributes which are positively affected by this simple strategy.

HOW I GOT MY NAME

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

SHAREAROUND is a perfect structure for extending teambuilding. Each group member, in numerical order, gets a turn to share information about themselves and be attentively listened to. It is the act of listening which strengthens the bonding between cooperative group members.

In this strategy, each group member is to share something about his or her name. Begin by saying:

Most of you have stories about how you got your name. Some of you were named after favorite relatives or friends. Sometimes there is a story about what influenced your parents to name you. Some of you have nicknames or special family names. Talk about your names in your groups. You may want to tell whether or not you like your name, whether you would change it if you could, and whether it has an interesting history.

Each child in the cooperative group tells his/her name story to the rest of the group. This allows for total attention to be given to the one who is sharing. When everyone's name stories have been told, suggest that one representative from each group summarize verbally what they have learned about one another's names. Allow for practice within the group and then call on a volunteer to share the group's name stories with the entire class. This becomes a group-by-group **SHAREAROUND** and its major advantage is that a far fewer number of individual children need to share with the entire class and yet their stories are heard.

Summary:

This strategy has great value in itself, but to carry it further even than the group-by-group variation, move into another realm and ask each group to create a story together entitled, "How I Got My Name."

THE SAMURAI WARRIOR

Subject Area: Social Studies

Directions:

Provide copies of the handout, "THE SAMURAI WARRIOR," for each of your cooperative groups. If you are emphasizing listening skills, when the selection is short and easily handled, as is this one, it might be constructive to provide only one handout per group as opposed to one handout for each member of the group. That page is then passed in turn to group members when it is their turn to read. Familiarize yourself with the instructions given for **SHAREAROUND** and ask your students to number themselves 1 through 4. Within their groups of four, each group member should then read, in numerical order, a paragraph from the selection. Since the noise level will reflect the sounds of several children reading at once, discuss with your groups the need to use "twelve-inch voices," voices that can't be heard over a foot away. Since some groups will finish before others, ask that students reread the selection to themselves until all groups have completed the reading.

Most of the time, when you choose to use this strategy you will be using textbooks and prepared materials which will not require duplication. This lesson is intended to illustrate the use of the strategy, it is certainly not suggested or necessary that materials be duplicated for use with **SHAREAROUND**. In fact, its ease of use and need for little advance planning makes it a multi-purpose, cross-curricular strategy. Should you wish to have only one student reading and the others concentrating on listening, one text could be open and the others closed unless the variation described in the next paragraph is employed.

One possible variation that you might find useful when preparing your students for a quiz, asks that they go back to the paragraphs they've just finished reading and, in numerical sequence, create questions to ask one another. Since every paragraph will not contain question material, students can move through the material until they find information on which they feel they may be tested. This questioning would be done on an informal basis and answers would be verbal. This becomes then, another avenue for teaching study skills as well as increasing opportunities for students to learn to take responsibility for their own learning.

Summary:

In days of old, when teachers held entire classes captive while one student read to the entire group and the rest wandered off mentally, there was little of value that was accomplished. Because the cooperative group is small, and the time one must wait for a turn is so short, this strategy has become an effective way to keep children involved when specific material must be covered. Using the variation which requires questions to be formulated further involves the group's participants.

THE SAMURAI WARRIOR

The armor-clad Samurai personified the ideals of strength and courage of Japan's feudal age. It was more than a sword and a metal suit of armor, however, that armed the mighty Samurai. He was also armed with a moral and psychological outlook - an unwritten code of personal courage and loyalty. This code was known as "bushido" and translates to "the way of the warrior." It demanded almost a religious commitment to a military life in which physical hardship was an everyday occurrence and the most honorable goal was a heroic death in battle.

A Samurai's first duty was to die fighting for his lords. As such, a warrior's defense was his skill at fighting, acquired through years of rigorous training designed to build strength of character and physical prowess. Before becoming a Samurai, one had to apprentice with masters of archery and swordsmanship. The Samurai was further toughened with long-lasting fasts and barefoot hikes through the snow. Once a Samurai mastered his skills, he trained daily, preparing himself thoroughly for battle.

Part of the Samurai's preparation for battle was his colorful suit of armor. The Samurai first put on a lightweight kimono and a pair of baggy trousers. His armor consisted of thigh guards, which were like sleeves of metal, broad shoulder guards, and a sheath for the torso. Unlike European armor with its heavy steel plates, Japanese armor was made of tiny scales of lacquered iron laced together in rows with silk cords. The result was a strong and lightweight protective covering. In addition, the Samurai soldier wore a protective helmet and a face mask of riveted iron. The Samurai took great pride in his appearance, especially during battle. It was felt to be a great disgrace if found to be carelessly dressed.

The Japanese people feel that the character of the Samurai lives on in Japan today. The qualities of the Samurai, commitment and dedication, ambition and inner strength, are still felt to be the most admirable of personal traits. Honorable and noble deeds are still revered by the Japanese, just as they were in the Middle Ages. The Samurai warrior represents for the Japanese the truest form of Japanese heroism —strength, courage, and commitment.

WHEN I WAS YOUNG IN THE MOUNTAINS

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

Cynthia Rylant's lovely story, *When I Was Young in the Mountains* (New York, E. P. Dutton, 1982), is a Caldecott Honor Book. Caldecott awards are given to exceptional picture books and it is easy to see why this book was named. It depicts the daily life of two young children and is truly a memoir with which children can vicariously identify.

As the basis of a cooperative group activity, and one which works exceedingly well with primary children (who may be non-readers), the pictures provide a wealth of visual clues so that the story is easily recalled.

Because this book is available in paperback and thus, less expensive, it is possible that you may wish to have several copies of it, so that each cooperative group has one copy. If that isn't possible, use a different book with each group, with this format as a model.

This activity can be done over two days. On the first day, read the story to the entire class. On the next day, review the story with the class by saying, *Yesterday, you heard a story,* ***When I Was Young in the Mountains.*** (Turn to the first page.) *Who remembers what this picture is showing. Remember, it begins "When I was young in the mountains..."* Allow time for the children to recall the ending: "...Grandfather came home in the evening covered with the black dust of a coal mine. Only his lips were clean, and he used them to kiss the top of my head." Proceed through the book, helping your students to recall each page and that each begins with, "When I was young in the mountains..."

Today, I am going to let you tell the story in your groups. One of you will hold the book and begin telling the story. When you finish the first page, you'll turn the page and the next person will tell what's happening. Only one of you will hold the book and turn the pages, but each of you will get a turn (in numerical order) to tell about your picture. All of the number three's may come and get a copy of the book.

Proceed by letting the children retell the story at their own pace within their cooperative groups.

Summary:

Learning to tell a story, recalling facts and details, summarizing, and sequencing all come into play when **SHAREAROUND** is used in this way.

Cooperative groups in the primary grades will also enjoy creating their own "When I Was Young in ..." stories. Substitute the name of your town or city and make a group of individual books which can be illustrated.

CURRENT EVENTS

Subject Area: Social Studies, Language Arts

Directions:

Generations of children have stood nervously in front of their classmates, sweaty palms attracting printer's ink, their twitchy fingers curling the edges of the shortest article they could locate in the newspaper. Attempting to communicate the main idea of a newspaper article and fulfill the requirement for "Current Events" has been the bane of classroom existence for many students. While recognizing the importance of current events, newspaper articles also provide diversity of reading selections, added opportunities to enhance reading comprehension, and often, a human interest perspective to increase student interest.

SHAREAROUND introduces a strategy for building familiarity with newspaper articles in a non-threatening environment - the cooperative group. One child in each cooperative group is given a current events assignment one day a week (Mondays, student #1, Tuesdays, student #2, etc.). That student's task is to find an article to share with his/her cooperative group. The article should be of sufficient interest and familiarity to the child sharing so that it will be relatively easy for the student to comment upon and explain it as necessary. Both the reading of the article and the student's comments should be listened to without interruption by group members.

Since each group member is given a separate day to report, this variation of **SHAREAROUND** takes four days. Asking your students to work cooperatively each day to write a **FOUR SENTENCE SUMMARY** of each other's newspaper articles, substituting the subject of the article for the character sentence, builds in both meaning and accountability as well as summarizing skills. On Fridays, each group should go over its summaries and submit all four of them to you with their accompanying news articles. You may wish to have the group decide on the most interesting article and share its summary with the entire class.

Summary:

Group accountability is important in assignments such as this one. Each group member must assume responsibility for a particular day and the group will be graded on their combined effort in their summaries. When your students have gained confidence within their groups, and should time allow, on some days you might vary the reporting and have the group members who are to report on that day give their report to the entire class.

CO-OP CONNECTIONS

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

This practical strategy can be used or adapted for all grade levels and is relevant in all curricular areas. Its strength is the simplicity of its format which helps students in cooperative groups to think critically as they seek out relationships and create connections. **CO-OP CONNECTIONS** is a cooperative activity which is approached in stages as children work independently and then as a team, with their responses refined as they move through the process.

In every area of the curriculum, there are words that are particularly relevant to a specific unit of study, whether it is history, biology, music, art, or literature. As you begin a new unit of study or as you introduce a literature selection, go over the materials which you will be using with your students and create a list of those words which the children may be encountering for the first time along with other words which are particularly important to the subject being introduced.

Use an overhead projector, chart paper, or a chalkboard to share the list with your students. They may either copy it or you may wish to provide copies. If there are a great many unfamiliar words, you may wish to allow some preparatory time to allow the children to use the dictionary or engage the class in a discussion of word meanings. Ideally, this strategy would best be used in situations where the words may be familiar, but the context different.

Allow the students to work independently on a separate sheet of paper grouping words together which appear to have common characteristics. (Examples might include animal words, words about weather, adjectives, things that shine, etc.) A paper folded into fourths works well with the student's selected classification label at the top of the quadrant. After working independently for a specified period of time, direct the students to share their groupings and work together to create more. This final collaboration will elicit less obvious classifications and the children should be encouraged to look more carefully for those characteristics which might create an unusual grouping.

CO-OP CONNECTIONS sets the scene for your students to learn to make inferences about their own learning. Hypothesizing about what they are going to be studying builds interest as well as anticipation. Each group should share its "connections" with the entire class and all labels and lists could be displayed in the classroom. Discussion should help the students to see relationships and formulate concepts and provide an opportunity to synthesize ideas.

TAKE A RIGHT

Subject Area: Social Studies

Directions:

The words listed on the page designed as a handout (see page 44) have been taken from the selection, "Turn Right at the Land Bridge" (see page 45). They may also be written on the board or shown on an overhead projector. Because the vocabulary used in this strategy is taken directly from the content information your students will be studying, the process which follows provides, as kind of a side benefit, an "anticipatory set," a readiness for the new subject matter being introduced.

This inductive approach to learning offers opportunities for inferential thinking and hypothesizing, areas of critical thinking which are often given short shrift by designers of curriculum.

To introduce a new unit of study in any subject area, use the words from the text and ask the children to create groupings of words which have common characteristics. As you create the list, choose words which have enough relevance to naturally provide clues for those groupings.

Ask your students to work independently for several minutes. A piece of paper folded into fourths, with each quadrant an area for listing words which have something in common, works well. The hypothesis, or label for each grouping, may be written at the top or bottom of each quadrant. Explain to your students that any reason they decide upon for grouping is acceptable. The group involvement which follows each student's independent efforts extends thinking and moves your students past obvious connections and into higher order thought processes, inductive thinking, and hypothesizing. Ideas for grouping from one student's paper will spark other grouping ideas. The excitement generated by creating categories and thereby creating their own meaning sets the stage for new learnings.

(Continued Next Page)

After your students have familiarized themselves with the listed words, you may wish to discuss the possibilities of subgroups and alternative ways of grouping. Because most students lack familiarity with this type of learning, it will affect the ease with which they move into this activity. Different degrees of guidance may be necessary until a comfort level is achieved. For that reason, independent student work followed by cooperative group work, which will generate more input and some brainstorming, produces the best results.

Summary:

While debriefing this strategy, ask your students:

What discoveries did you make by yourself?

What discoveries did you and your group make together?

What were you thinking about during the times you were labeling and categorizing?

What were some of your new ideas?

Plan to introduce the actual subject matter reading material after there has been sufficient time to discuss group findings. The relationships discovered and inferred by your students will reinforce the learnings to come and serve also to spark interest in new information. As groups grow in the skills related to making hypotheses, writing assignments which state those hypotheses may also be generated.

Examine the words below and find groupings of two or more words that are related in some way. Think of a way to describe or label your groupings. After working independently for about ten minutes, work with your cooperative group to create more. Be prepared to explain the classification of each grouping.

hunters
continent
fishermen
wildlife
Alaska
glaciers
land bridge
Eskimos
environments
canoe
wanderers
land
knives
ivory
tools

Asia
North America
Ice Age
mariners
interior
Indians
basketry
Arctic
culture
marine mammals
languages
totem poles
stone
sea
ancestors

TURN RIGHT AT THE LAND BRIDGE...

During the Ice Age, glaciers held most of the waters of the oceans in a frozen state. As the Ice Age ended more than 15,000 years ago, the ice began to melt and a land bridge formed between Asia and Alaska.

Before the seas rose and water covered that land bridge, hunters from Asia crossed into North America. These Asian hunters were the first to see Alaska and, in fact, were the first to see our continent.

As the hunters wandered from place to place, they began to settle into areas which they liked. As they settled in different places, they developed different life-styles. Their life-styles, or ways of life, were directly related to their different environments.

Those who settled along the coast of southeast Alaska had a wealth of seafood, were great canoe and totem pole builders, and were also skilled in basketry. These were the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian Indians. They developed a culture much different than those Indians who roamed further inland and settled there.

The Athapascan Indians occupied the interior Arctic areas. They fished for salmon, but spent more time hunting for moose, caribou, bears, and other wildlife. They had few arts because they spent so much time moving about, but they did make knives of stone and copper.

Eskimos are another group of native Alaskans. Eskimos and Indians are different in many ways. Their life-styles are so different that many scientists think that the Indians and Eskimos may even have come over on the land bridge at different times. The two groups have different languages and different ways of life. Indians relate more to the land and to animal hunting, while Eskimos relate more to the sea and sea mammal hunting.

Eskimos settled along the north and west coasts and islands of Alaska. Those who settled in the southwest were the Yup'ik and in the far north, the Inupiat. The Eskimos of the Aleutian Islands are known as Aleuts. Aleuts were very skilled at basketry and were expert mariners, while the Eskimos of the coastal areas carved ivory into tools, utensils and ornaments. The sea was very important to all Eskimos.

There are many Eskimos and Indians who still live much the same as their ancestors did and many who have changed and adapted their life-style to more modern-day ways.

WHY THINGS GO TOGETHER

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

A flaw in much primary curriculum is that it is often predictable and of the spoon-fed variety, allowing little latitude for inferential thinking. Because of limited reading ability, first, second, and third grade children aren't exposed to these kinds of planned experiences to practice reasoning skills. **CO-OP CONNECTIONS** is easily adapted to primary grades by creating simple word lists and/or using familiar words to introduce the idea of "Why Things Go Together."

With children seated in their cooperative groups, the words listed on the next page may be written and pronounced one-at-a-time as they are displayed either on an overhead projector or the chalkboard. As your students begin to make connections between words and to discuss potential groupings, allow for small-group discussion time and, if you have classroom aides or older students who are able to come in and help, the suggested groupings may be written down. A folded paper, as described in the directions for this strategy, works well. Obviously, if your students are able to, they may do the writing themselves.

Categorizing the groupings may simply be a verbal exercise, discussed first within cooperative groups and then shared with the class. At first, children will find obvious connections, but discussion and further searching will elicit groupings that are less obvious. The ability to find relationships between words and conceptualizing those relationships is the beginning of analogical thinking, measured on most intelligence tests, but rarely taught. This cooperative activity definitely fosters higher level thinking.

While this lesson demonstrates the uses of the strategy, it is a lesson out of context. After introducing the strategy, consider words from fairy tales and nursery rhymes, words about specific units of study: holiday words, animal words, words about seasons, and words to build interest in topics to be studied.

(Continued Next Page)

WORD LIST

WATER
NOSE
EGG
CAT
CLEAN
BEE
TAIL
TRUCK
BACK
TRAIN
HAT
BELL

ANIMAL
BUZZ
DOOR
FOOT
BEDROOM
DOOR
CRY
PUPPY
SLEEP
BARK
READ

FARM
HEAD
PEOPLE
BUS
HOUSE
BARN
HEN
CAR
FRONT
KITTEN
SING
PONY

Summary:

There are no right or wrong answers, any connections may be made. "Words that end in y" are as valid a rationale for grouping as is "Noises." When debriefing, commenting upon how one idea can lead to another will encourage more "piggy-backing."

FOLKTALE MAGIC

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

Folktales and fairytales are perennial favorites of children. Recurring motifs and a bit of magic are vital for this genre. This variation on **CO-OP CONNECTIONS** provides a list of ingredients which lend themselves to the creation of a folk or fairytale. Proceeding as if your students were to create groupings in order to move into hypothesizing, allow all conclusions. Use the groupings as the basis for group-generated creative writing.

The following words are an amalgam from varied folk sources. The more experience your students have had reading and hearing folk tales, the more successful this will be. Encourage your students to use inductive reasoning to group the words and phrases. Provide time for group and class discussion of why the groupings make sense. Discover what your students see as the rationale behind the groupings, and then, as categories are elaborated upon, allow the groups to use their hypotheses to write their own folk tales.

The word list includes:

RUSTY KETTLE
DISGUISE
BROOM
GOLDEN APPLE
A SILVER BELL
WIND
TREASURE
GOLDEN KEYS
TWO CATS
THREE TASKS
CLEVER MONKEY
MIDNIGHT
OBSTACLES
SMALL DOG
OLD MAN
RAIN
THREE QUESTIONS
FIRE
WHITE CRANE
CLOSED DOOR

Summary:

The white crane, the clever monkey, the small dog, and the two cats could be part of a convoluted plot. Wind, rain, and fire may be three events necessary before three questions are asked and three tasks completed. Results will be wonderfully different. Be sure to provide time for groups to share with the class. **CO-OP CONNECTIONS** promotes creative, inductive, and intuitive thinking.

TAKE A NUMBER

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

The many uses of **TAKE A NUMBER** will make this one of your favorite and most often utilized strategies. To begin with, it is an ideal way to review factual information in preparation for a test. It actively involves every member of the cooperative group and promotes interdependence while creating an atmosphere of interest and excitement.

Effective communication is essential to the success of this strategy and students learn quickly that group goals and individual needs can be met at the same time.

Ask the children in their groups of four to number themselves 1-4. Explain to them that they will be working closely with one another and that they will also be required to work quietly as they discuss answers to the questions you will be asking. The questions you use may be taken from a text or teacher-made. The sole requirement for the questions is that their answers be factual and brief. This format is ideal for "yes" and "no" answers as well as "true" and "false."

Discuss the need for careful listening as you phrase your question. After the children have heard the question, they should be instructed to very quietly discuss possible answers and to make sure that each group member knows the answer. After giving the groups a reasonable period of time, say, "I call for silence," then call one of the numbers from 1-4. (A major strength of this strategy is that no one knows which number will be called, so all group members must be included in the discussion.)

Each group member with that number is to stand. All communication between group members should stop at this point while all team representatives record their answers. Answers may be recorded on small slates, sheets of paper, or, in the case of one word answers for true and false or yes/no questions, "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" on a count of three may work best. You may count down slowly from five as the children record their answers and then ask for them to be shown to you.

Since interdependence and mastery of facts is the purpose of this strategy, you may wish to have teams keep their own points and earn specific privileges as they gain team points. With each team working toward a common goal, competition between teams should not be an issue.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Subject Area: Social Studies

Directions:

This strategy requires that answers to questions be very brief, true or false, or yes or no. It has been used successfully when children have had small slates on which to write their answers (one slate per group), one sheet of paper, response cards (with the words "yes" or "no" printed on them), and with "thumbs up" (true) and "thumbs down" (false) indicated by the group's numbered representative.

The following scenario is typical of the **TAKE A NUMBER** strategy, the questions were formulated to accommodate the information given in the "Harriet Tubman" handout (see page 52):

Ask the children in their groups of four to "take a number" by numbering themselves 1-4. Explain to them that they will be working closely with one another and because they will be discussing answers, they'll need to talk quietly so that other groups will not hear them. A "huddle" formation works very well. They will also need to be certain that every group member knows the answer to every question.

Here is the first question. "True" or "False?" Ship captains had been bringing Africans to America for two hundred years. Discuss the answer quietly. Look at me when you are ready.

I call for silence.

Number two, please stand. On the count of three, indicate with a "thumbs up if the answer is true, and a "thumbs down" if the answer is false. (Repeat the question) *One...two...three...show your answer. The answer is true.*

At this point, you might want to ask each group to keep a record of their correct answers. Praise those groups who were able to discuss answers quietly. Instead of a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" response, you may wish to consider a verbal "true" or "false." This can be done on the count of three in unison by the group's representatives who are standing. Another variation allows answers to be written on slates or a sheet of paper and then shown to you.

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Question #1 was true. Other questions could include:

2. Harriet wanted to follow the light of the moon in order to escape. (False)
3. The escape route was called the Underground Railroad. (True)
4. Harriet wanted to be sold so she could be with her sisters. (False)
5. Harriet believed in freedom so she fought for it. (True)

Depending on the length and difficulty of the selection, you may wish to ask anywhere from five to twenty questions. You may even choose to use those questions presented in the text provided that a short answer format is provided. These kinds of questions access basic knowledge or information. They generally do not require critical thinking, only recall of facts. Communication and sharing of ideas are a necessity. Children in cooperative groups learn to understand the objectives of this strategy quickly since once a member stands to respond to a question, further discussion among members must stop.

Summary:

After groups have tallied their answers, ask the children:

What worked well with this strategy?

What did it feel like to share information?

How did you feel when it was your turn to be the representative for your group?

HARRIET TUBMAN

A Battle of a Different Kind

"If a fire is lit properly, it will burn," her mother said.

"I know, Mama, and if it rains there will be puddles somewhere."

"I'm telling you Harriet, some things don't change and they're never going to change. Just like fires burning and water puddling. And being a slave!"

"Mama, you told me the story of my great-grandma being kidnapped and brought here to be a slave. She was free before she came here. I can't change fires burning or rain falling, but I will change what I can change. I won't always be a slave. I'll be free someday."

Harriet Tubman was no more than five years old when she was sent to work in the Big House. The house where the plantation owners, her owners, lived was very different than the shabby cabin in which she slept. Her jobs in the Big House began when the sun rose and ended when the sun set.

"Harriet! Why is that baby crying? You're not rocking the cradle gently enough! Go help the cook prepare lunch."

Harriet rubbed her own hungry stomach as she went off. She hadn't eaten since the night before.

So Harriet washed, scrubbed, rocked, and thought. And if she thought too much and her master didn't think she'd worked hard enough, she was whipped. She grew older, always fearing that if she didn't please her master that she might be sold as her sisters had been. She knew she could be sold just like a horse or a piece of furniture. She had to leave before that happened. If she were sold it would be way south, much harder to reach the North. She had to be free.

Harriet gave a lot of thought to how she might change things. Freedom became more important to her than anything.

Freedom is something we don't think about because we have it. We would probably spend a great deal of time thinking about it if we lost it. Harriet had never had freedom, but she knew what would happen if she opened the door in the bird cage in the Big House. That bird wouldn't be there for long. Harriet felt like a caged bird. She would never be happy unless she was free.

Harriet was a slave because her family were slaves. Her great-grandmother had come from Africa, but it hadn't been by choice. She had been captured, put on a crowded ship,

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taken to a country on the other side of the globe, and sold. The country Harriet's great-grandmother had been brought to was America. She didn't want to be here, but she no longer had her freedom, so she had to stay. By the time Harriet was born, ship captains had been bringing Africans to America for two hundred years and over four million black slaves worked on farms and plantations. Harriet was related to those early Africans.

Harriet longed for freedom. She didn't want to work in the fields without being paid, she didn't want to be a servant. She wanted to be free. But, escaping was not as easy as opening a door and leaving, because leaving was illegal. Harriet was a slave in the state of Maryland. There were other states that were slave states, and there were nearby states that were considered "free" states. In order to escape, Harriet would have to leave Maryland and go to a state that did not allow slavery.

Except for the early-morning light peeking through the openings between the logs, their cabin was dark. Harriet was sitting on her rag-covered bed of straw. Her mother looked over at her.

"What were you and your dad talking about last night?" she asked.

"Well, Mama, we were talking about fires burning and rain puddling. You know, all those things that don't change."

"You were out there for a long time, Harriet, you were talking about other things besides fire and rain."

"We were talking about something else, Mama, about something else that doesn't change. We were talking about how the North Star shines. We were talking about how some things might change."

"Harriet, you are looking for trouble if you are talking about the North Star. If you have been listening to all those folks talking about going North to freedom, you are just listening to them wishing they could. If you try following that star to the North, they'll come hunting for you with dogs, they'll put out a money reward. I'm frightened for you."

"Mama, I'm afraid too, but I have to leave. If I can escape and reach the North, I can find work and I can help our people to be free."

Harriet waited until night and left Maryland and went to Philadelphia. She used the North Star as her guide. Following the North Star, she traveled only at night until she reached safety.

In the North there were many people who wanted to help slaves leave the South. Harriet joined those people and became an important part of an escape route called the Underground Railroad. There were no trains on this railroad, but there were stations. The stations were hiding places along the way. There was very little of it that was underground, but it was a secret, and saying "underground" reminded those who were helping that the secret had to be kept.

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Usually, the words "bravery" and "courage" remind us of battles and battlefields. Harriet's battles were of a different kind. They didn't take place on a battlefield, but they did take bravery. They took place in darkness and in secret places. Her courage was special because she risked her life and her freedom. She couldn't enjoy being free when she remembered the ones who weren't free. The battle she fought was for something she believed in. Freedom.

"Come quickly," Harriet said as she silently entered the cabin. "We have a long way to go and runaway slaves don't have much time."

They entered the forest, huddling together and waiting for her directions. This was her tenth or eleventh trip back. She used different paths, different safe houses, different boats, and different horse-pulled wagons.

"We will cross the river here. Take off your shoes and hold them above your head. The water moves quickly, but it is not too deep. You'll dry off on the rest of the journey."

"You sound like a general giving orders," one of the escaping slaves said.

They reached the dark woods on the other side of the river. "I've been called General Tubman before," she answered, laughing quietly.

As she guided escaping slaves to safety in the free states, Harriet's bravery was tested many times. Slave hunters were offered thousands of dollars to capture her, but she continued taking small groups through forests, hiding on boats, in attics, and in underground tunnels. With special handshakes and passwords, her friends on the Underground Railroad helped her. Underground Railroad "conductors" were people who led groups across state boundaries.

Her own escape took great courage, but it was her return to the South and the danger of recapture for which she is remembered. Each of the fifteen times she returned, she helped other slaves to freedom. She helped more than three hundred black slaves find their way to the North. Always at night, always in secret, always in danger.

The success of the Underground Railroad as a way to freedom in the North was due to Harriet Tubman's courage and her belief that she could change things. None of her "passengers" was ever recaptured, and Harriet was even able to rescue her own parents. Her journeys in darkness to help others to freedom are reason enough to remember her name - Harriet Tubman - a heroine in a battle of a different kind.

GO WITH THE FLOE

Subject Area: Science

Directions:

Using the selection, "In White Tie and Tails" (see page 57), you have two options for using this strategy. The first option is to simply create questions with brief factual answers related to the information in the handout. That format is demonstrated in the previous lesson in this section, "The Underground Railroad." The second option recognizes that there are often prior learnings which must take place before true comprehension can occur.

In this instance, there are several words used in "In White Tie and Tails" which may be unfamiliar to your students. Many times, we assume that our students understand the vocabulary in the selections we assign and then, when we test for comprehension, we are surprised to discover that there were some very basic things which were misunderstood.

The first step is to have your students work independently, highlighting or underlining all the words in the selection which they do not understand. After a few moments, have them compare papers with one another and mark also the words which their teammates have noted. Ask them to create a group list of words whose meanings they don't know, and then provide dictionary time for those words to be defined. Since your purpose is to promote understanding of subject matter reading, this is time well spent.

Ask a representative from each group to bring one copy of the group's word list to you. As they study definitions, forewarn your students that you will be giving the definition and they will be responsible for supplying the correct word. Collecting the word lists allows you to see which groups are working to their potential. The strategy itself will bring that awareness to the group.

After the children have heard the definitions, they should be reminded to very quietly discuss the answers and to be certain that each group member knows the word. By allowing the group to refer to the original handout as the definition is stated, a contextual framework is automatically supplied.

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Here is a possible scenario:

Which word means a single piece of floating sea ice? (Wait a few moments for group discussion to take place and then call for silence.) *All the number three's stand up. On the count of three, say the word. One, two, three...* In choral response, all the children who are number three should answer, *"Floe."*

Which word means an inhabitant of a particular place? (Wait a few moments for group discussion to take place and then call for silence.) *I call for silence. All the number two's stand up. On the count of three, say the word. One, two, three...* In choral response, all the children who are number two should answer, *"Denizen."*

Other questions could include:

Which word means an external organ or part? (appendage)

Which word means beneath the skin? (subcutaneous)

Which word means to bring partly digested food back from the stomach to the mouth? (regurgitated)

Which word means a bird's feathers? (plumage)

Which word means leaping into the air or onto the land or ice from the water? (porpoising)

Which word means fierce, savage, or violently cruel? (ferocious)

Which word means someone who lives by capturing and feeding upon other animals? (predator)

Which word means resulting in death? (fatal)

Which word refers to someone who associates with someone else? (companion)

Summary:

By giving the definitions first, and asking for single word answers, this strategy becomes even more useful. Instead of choral responses, answers may be written on chalkboards or sheets of paper and shown to you on the count of three. A follow-up activity might include team-created sentences using the words for which the definitions were given.

IN WHITE TIE AND TAILS

What's black and white and red all over? A sunburned penguin, you say? What wears a tuxedo all day and always goes out to eat? A penguin of course! Why did the penguin cross the iceberg? So he could go with the floe!

See here! Penguins are no laughing matter. On the contrary, the seventeen species of penguins comprise one of the most fascinating orders of birds in the world. Found only in the Southern Hemisphere, these flightless denizens of land and sea range in size from the 41 cm (16 inches) blue penguin to the majestic 120+ cm (48 inches) emperor penguin. Of these species, only three can call Antarctica "Home, Chilly Home:" the chinstrap, the Adélie, and the emperor.

Because their short legs are far back on their bodies, penguins possess an almost man-like upright posture. Over the ages, their wings have become flippered appendages which serve them well in swimming and diving. Penguins' entire bodies are wonderful examples of nature's ability to adapt to any environment. Their bones are solid and help provide extra weight in deep dives down as far as 850 feet (approximately 250 meters). A heavy layer of subcutaneous fat gives heat-saving insulation to a trunk covered with thick down. Small hard feathers overlap the down-like roof shingles to form a protective covering over all.

Most penguins take turns incubating a clutch of one or two eggs on a bare rock, a nest of stones, or, in the case of the emperor- on the male's feet under a fold of abdominal skin. The chicks are fed regurgitated food from the parents until they shed their down and acquire their first full plumage.

Incredibly graceful swimmers, penguins spend much of their time in the water feeding. Porpoising, leaps into the air or onto the land or ice from the water, can catapult a penguin as high as two meters into the air. Leopard seals, which are ferocious and deadly predators of penguins, often prove to be fatal swimming companions when a penguin's jump to safety fails.

THE SAMURAI: NOBLE HEROES

Subject Area: Social Studies

Directions:

The selection, "The Samurai Warrior" (p.38), is an example of the type of material which is successfully used with this strategy. You will be creating questions based on what has been read, and the answers to those questions must be brief, "yes" or "no" or "true" and "false."

Cooperative group members will consult quietly together, knowing that only one of them will be called on for the answer. After a question is asked, a short time period is allowed for discussion. Children quickly discover how important communication is because once you call on one of their numbers, talking is no longer allowed.

Here is a possible scenario:

What was the unwritten code of loyalty called? (Allow approximately sixty seconds for discussion.)

I call for silence.

All of the number four's stand. (This means that each person who is number 4 in each group stands up.)

On the count of three, say the word in unison.

One, two, three...

BUSHIDO

Next question...

Name the two sports a Samurai had to master. (Allow approximately sixty seconds for discussion.)

I call for silence.

Number one's - stand and write the answers on your slates.

(They should be standing and writing)

On the count of three, show me your answers.

One, two, three...

Their slates should show the words **"archery"** and **"swordsmanship."**

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Next question...

What was a Samurai's most honorable goal? (Allow sixty seconds.)

I call for silence.

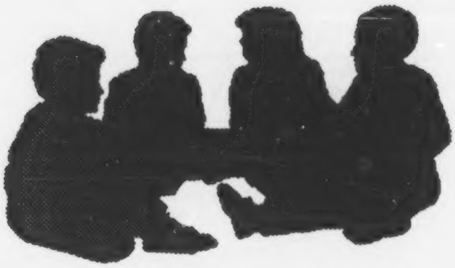
Number three's stand and write the answer on your slates.

On the count of three, show me your answers.

Their slates should indicate that they understand the Samurai's goal was to die a heroic death in battle.

Summary:

TAKE A NUMBER is an excellent way to have a quick review before a test. Everyone is involved and responsible. A sheet of paper and a marking pen works as well as slates do, and a "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" sign can indicate "true" or "false" just as voices can. There are many options. It is important to keep the pace up and to vary the numbers called.



TEAMS AS TEACHERS

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

TEAMS AS TEACHERS incorporates the format of **TAKE A NUMBER**, but puts a different slant on that strategy by placing students in the role of teachers and putting them in charge of their own learning. As with **TAKE A NUMBER, TEAMS AS TEACHERS** is most effective for review and mastery learning of factual information. Acting as a facilitator, discuss the "guide on the side" role you will be playing, that the responsibility for the success of this process is up to them, and invite the students to formulate reasons why the tactics involved in this strategy constitute a powerful learning tool.

Have the students in each group of four number themselves 1-4. Each group, or team, should also have a number. Explain to the children that they will be given a predetermined amount of time to work with their group to formulate three (or more) questions based on recently studied material. Again, the questions must have brief answers and must be about important information. Each team must know the answers to its questions. Each team has an opportunity to be the "teacher." Team #1 is the first teacher and each member of the team has a specific role to play during the team's tenure as "teacher:"

> Person #1 of Team #1 asks one of the questions. Team members of all the other teams discuss with their teams possible answers, being careful to include everyone on the team.
>
> Person #2 (from Team #1) gives them a reasonable time to talk and then says, "I call for silence." Person #2 also calls a number from 1-4. All the students with that number (on the other teams) stand up and write the answer on a slate or paper, or are prepared to answer "yes" or "no" in unison, or to give the "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" signal on the count of three.
>
> Person #3 (from Team #1) counts down slowly from five to give adequate time for written responses. ("5, 4, 3, 2, 1, stop.") Then Person #3 says, "Hold up your slate/paper."
>
> Person #4 (from Team #1) tells them if they have the correct answer. Teams keep their own scores. Team points may be tallied and be part of a semester-long team scoring system.

TEAMS AS TEACHERS continues until all teams have been "teacher."

Ask your students what they regarded as valuable about the process of formulating questions and "teaching" their classmates. Explain that teaching is a good way of learning and that finding questions to ask also requires learning the answers to those questions.

"REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE"

Subject Area: Science

Directions:

TEAMS AS TEACHERS places students in the role of teachers. "Reach Out and Touch Someone" is a perfect vehicle for modeling this strategy as it is filled with factual information which could be both overwhelming and confusing.

You might consider using **SHAREAROUND** (reading paragraphs in numerical order) as a way for the students within their cooperative groups to become familiar with the information on the handout. Then, describe the format for **TEAMS AS TEACHERS** by saying:

You're going to have a chance to work with your group to make up five questions about the information on this sheet. Have a recorder write down the questions and have someone else in the group write down the answers. Be sure to ask questions which require factual answers, the shorter the answer the better. Number yourselves off. Let's number each group, too.

Provide adequate time for questions to be formulated. Circulate so that groups remain on task.

Team #1 may be the first teacher. Each person on the team has a specific job. Person #1 will ask the questions. Person #2 will say, "I call for silence," and also calls the number for a member of another team to stand up and be prepared to give the answer. Person #3 counts down from five to give time for written responses or down from three for an oral response or a signal. Person #4 checks for correct answers.

Person #1: *Once a meteoroid enters earth's atmosphere, what is it called?*

Person #2: *I call for silence. All the Number #4's, please stand up.*

Person #3: *On the count of three, all of you tell me in unison what a meteoroid is called once it enters earth's atmosphere. One, two, three...*

Person #4: *Meteor is the correct answer.*

At this juncture, this strategy offers two options. Team #1 may ask all of its questions using the format above, or each team may have

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a turn being teachers until all questions are asked. This may be a more desirable way of doing it since duplicate questions will be eliminated and it will be more likely that all teams will have a chance to be teachers.

Other possible questions could include:

What is another name for a meteor? (shooting star)

What is the name of the spot from which it appears that meteors originate? (the radiant)

What does the suffix -id mean? (daughter of)

What falls to earth from shooting stars? (cosmic dust)

What is a meteor called once it hits the earth? (a meteorite)

Summary:

After all of the teams' questions have been asked, ask your students:

What did you like about this strategy?

What didn't you like?

What did you learn from being teachers? (Hopefully, some one will express the thought that teaching is a great way of learning.)

REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE

Many years ago, it was believed that meteors were signs of heavenly anger. The gods' messages, it was felt, were sent by way of fireballs - a method of communication with little reliability, but great impact.

The feeling then, as now, was that first you had to get your audience to pay attention. Tribal chiefs and foreign princes trembled in both bare feet and boots as meteors streaked across the skies. They worried more about the possibility of impending death than scientific explanations. We shall concern ourselves with scientific explanations.

A meteoroid is a solid object which moves through space at tremendous speed - 25 to 30 miles per second. It is often no bigger than the head of a pin or a speck of dust. As it races through space, a bright glowing streak appears, which means that it has come into the earth's atmosphere. Now, this mass of glowing gases is called a meteor. It is one of at least ninety million which are seen to enter our atmosphere daily. Meteors speed only 20 to 70 miles above the earth. They collide with molecules of air, create friction, heat, and then, burn. These "shooting stars" produce cosmic dust which falls to earth, several hundred tons of it each day.

Sometimes a meteoroid will reach the ground without completely burning up. It never goes through the meteor stage; it never returns to the dust from whence it came; it just hits the ground and is henceforth known as a meteorite. Some meteorites may be comet debris; larger meteorites may be escapees from the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter. Some metal is found in all meteorites, which differentiates them from rocks found on the earth's surface, but no new elements have been found in them.

Comets are also thought to be responsible for the atmospheric display known as a meteor shower. A comet's participation involves sharing a bit of itself. Since comets are made up of practically nothing, this is very unselfish. The gravitational pull of a large planet can rip away some of the solid matter in the comet, and the particles, although remaining in cometary orbit, pass through the earth's orbit as they move into our atmosphere. Each trip around the sun also pulls rock and dust particles out of the gaseous cometary matter.

When a meteor shower occurs, it appears that the meteors originated from the same spot - that spot is called the radiant. This is somewhat of an optical illusion as meteors travel in straight lines, and it is the earth passing through the meteor swarm, in addition to where you are standing and watching, which creates the illusion. In some meteor showers you can see as many as 50 meteors in one hour. In 1833, one meteor shower had 240,000 meteors in nine hours. There are about a dozen meteor showers each year that occur on about the same date. The radiant of many of these showers appears to be a particular constellation. The meteor shower names all end with the suffix -id, which comes from the Greek and means "daughter of." The most well known are the Perseids, from the constellation Perseus, and the Leonids, from the constellation Leo.

PYRAMID

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

The purpose of **PYRAMID** is to provide a structured format for students in cooperative groups to collaboratively summarize either factual information or fictional text. To ensure the success of this strategy, use familiar material to model the process, use the chalkboard the first time instead of a copy of the provided diagram, and involve the entire class in the creation of the first pyramid. Explain to the children that they must agree on the wording of each line of the pyramid.

Since group consensus is required, this format encourages concise writing and enhances comprehension.

Using the model on the next page, provide the children with the following steps for filling in the lines of the pyramid:

Line 1 contains one word which tells who or what the subject of the story is.

Line 2 contains two words which describe or elaborate on line 1.

Line 3 contains three words telling where events take place.

Line 4 contains four words telling the "problem" or situation.

Line 5 contains five words describing an important story event.

Line 6 contains six words elaborating on line 5.

Line 7 contains seven words which may describe another story event and/or lead into line 8.

Line 8, in eight words, tells the end, summarizes the story, or offers the given solution.

Each group should choose a spokesperson to verbally share the group's pyramid with the entire class. These may be posted on a bulletin board as well. Encourage the children to comment upon the variety of responses, remind them that "right" answers may vary, and ask the children to describe the thinking they were doing during the group's discussions.

PYRAMID

____

________ ________

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________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________ ________

SWIMMY

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

The use of wonderful children's literature to teach skills related to language arts has a major advantage. The interest which can be inspired by a well-told story provides built-in motivation which transfers to accompanying activities. While Leo Lionni's *Swimmy* (New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), has been beloved by very young children, it is a good example of a picture book which can be successfully used in the intermediate grades, albeit with the disclaimer that you (the teacher) understand that the story was intended for younger children, but that you have another purpose in reading it.

That "other purpose" is the teaching of summarizing skills. The simplicity of the story line in *Swimmy* and the fact that this particular story has a moral, or lesson, makes it ideal as the basis for a lesson in which children will learn to write in their own words as they retell the account of Swimmy's method of solving a problem.

Swimmy is a little black fish whose dilemma begins when all of his brothers and sisters are eaten by a large tuna fish. Although he is alone, he enjoys all of the interesting creatures he encounters. One day, hiding in rocks and weeds, he finds another school of fish much like the one he'd belonged to. Afraid to play out in the open because they might be eaten, Swimmy seeks a solution.

With the rules for the pyramid posted on the board or on a chart, each cooperative group is to work together creating a group summary in pyramid form. The necessity for consensus and conciseness may result in a product that resembles this:

SWIMMY
LITTLE FISH
IN THE SEA
ESCAPED FROM THE TUNA
WHO ATE HIS WHOLE FAMILY.
HE SWAM ALONE UNTIL HE FOUND
ANOTHER SCHOOL WHO COULD SWIM WITH HIM
LIKE ONE GIANT FISH, CHASING THE BIG ONES

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Summary:

As each group shares its creation, questions such as these may provide greater awareness of group contributions:

What was the most difficult thing to do?

How did the group help?

How would you change your pyramid?

The group should appoint a recorder to make a final copy of their pyramid for classroom bulletin board display. An art project based on the exquisite Lionni illustrations would be a thematic follow-up to this assignment, as would paragraph writing (possibly the **FOUR SENTENCE SUMMARY** model) by individual students. Whenever possible, with assignments of this type, thematic connections make experiences even richer.

FOLLOWING A STAR

Subject Area: Social Studies

Directions:

PYRAMID is an engaging strategy for group collaboration. Increased comprehension, added interest, and a greater grasp of information occurs as children work together to synthesize their learnings. This strategy can be used to summarize both fiction and non-fiction or reflect on an experience shared. Either the **SHAREAROUND** activity or the **TAKE A NUMBER** activity which also use the "Harriet Tubman" material, would allow your students to become familiar enough with the content to be able to synthesize it. The idea of using multiple strategies to convey subject matter information is powerful as both a teaching and learning device.

You might want to guide your entire class through **PYRAMID** with simpler material (e.g. the **PYRAMID** lesson on *Swimmy*) the first time you use it, getting input from all class members before asking cooperative groups to work independently as they create their own pyramids. This will give them practice and added confidence. As children respond, record their suggestions on the chalkboard, each line below the previous one to form the shape of a pyramid:

Who can think of one word which tells the subject of the story we read? (Possible answer: Harriet)

What are two words which tell something about who or what Harriet is? (Possible answer: A slave)

What three words would tell where events in the story took place? (Possible answer: In the South)

What are four words which tell what Harriet's problem is? (Possible answer: Longing to be free)

Can you think of five words which describe something important in the story? (Possible answer: Followed a star to safety)

And what else happened? Think of six words. (Possible answer: And returned to take others north)

Tell about something else in the story in seven words. (Possible answer: Fifteen dangerous trips on the Underground Railroad)

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Last line. You have eight words to tell how the story ended or give a summary statement. (Possible answer: Journeys in a battle of a different kind.)

HARRIET
A SLAVE
IN THE SOUTH
LONGING TO BE FREE
FOLLOWED A STAR TO SAFETY
AND RETURNED TO TAKE OTHERS NORTH
FIFTEEN DANGEROUS TRIPS ON THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
JOURNEYS IN A BATTLE OF A DIFFERENT KIND

Encourage a variety of responses as your groups begin to build their own pyramids. Ask each group to choose a spokesperson to share the group's creation. When the children have finished sharing, ask about what they were thinking as they worked.

Summary:

What was difficult about synthesizing (bringing together, combining) the information? What was fun or easy about it?

Discuss how the ideas of others can combine with your own to make another, sometimes better, idea.

BUT, WILL IT FLOAT?

Subject Area: Science

Directions:

PYRAMID can be an interesting and useful cooperative group report format. It requires not only understanding of factual information, but the ability to synthesize it. An activity, such as the one that follows, can be used anytime during a unit of study to capsulize increments of data. In science, an example would be the demonstration of an experiment followed by discussion and then explanatory information. Cooperative groups could also perform experiments themselves.

Beginning with either the information or the experiment, your students will collaboratively summarize what they observe, hear and read. Let's begin with the experiment first:

Fill two eight ounce glasses with water to about three-fourths of an inch below the top. Dissolve four tablespoons of sugar in one glass. Be sure to remember which glass is which, but do not tell your class that there is a difference in the contents of the glasses. Take two uncooked eggs and put one in the glass with plain water and one in the glass with sugar water. The sugar water has enough buoyancy so that the egg will float.

This is another of those instances where a second cooperative strategy neatly fits. Review the overview for **MAILBOX** (see page 82) and ask the question:

> *What do you think caused one egg to sink and the other to float?*

When each person in the group has completed the process of paraphrasing the previous speaker's comments and stating their own ideas, provide background information to each group by reading aloud or duplicating the following:

Over two thousand years ago, a Greek named Archimedes did some similar experiments. They were experiments in buoyancy. What do you think that word means? It means that water exerts an upward force, it pushes up against the downward force of gravity. He discovered that if he put something in a container that was filled to the brim

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with water and collected all the water that overflowed, that the overflow liquid took up the same amount of space as the submerged object. Then, when he weighed the overflow, he found that the weight of the displaced water equaled the weight lost by the object when it was submerged. In simpler words, water is pushed aside by the object which takes up the water's space. The object weighs less in water than on the land. He also found that some liquids have greater buoyancy than others. If water contains dissolved material, such as salt or sugar, it will weigh more than fresh water. That means it will also have greater buoyancy and can push up with greater force. What conclusion can you draw? The sugar water has enough buoyancy so that the egg will float.

Summary:

Review the rules for **PYRAMID**, adapting them as needed to allow your students to condense and combine both the experiment and the information. Permit each group to share its **PYRAMID**. Ask:

What ideas did your group have about the eggs?

How could you do this as a magic trick?

A possible **PYRAMID** might look like this:

BUOYANCY
UPWARD FORCE
IN A GLASS
FILLED WITH SUGAR WATER
A RAW EGG CAN FLOAT
BECAUSE IT PUSHES THE WATER ASIDE
A GREEK NAMED ARCHIMEDES DISCOVERED LIQUID'S BUOYANCY
AND GAVE US GOOD IDEAS FOR MAGIC TRICKS

"CRAYOLA INTRODUCES 8 NEW COLORS"

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

Newspaper articles brought in for reports on current events or for their human interest perspective often provide interesting material for cooperative group work. **PYRAMID** is an ideal strategy for both summarizing factual information and structuring opportunities for your students to practice consensus building.

Review the directions for **PYRAMID** with your entire class. Make copies of "Crayola introduces 8 new colors" (see next page) so that each group of four has at least two copies of the article. In this way, children can initially work in dyads. Using a **SHAREAROUND** format, allow time for the children to read the article, paragraph by paragraph, each taking one. Suggest that time be spent going over each of the requirements for the eight lines before any writing occurs. Since there must be agreement on wording, that discussion time is very important. Each group should choose a Recorder as well as a Reader. The Reader assumes responsibility for reading the requirements for each of the lines. The Recorder fills in the lines of the pyramid.

Summary:

This strategy works particularly well when the subject is one which involves your students emotionally. While eliminating old crayon colors may not affect everybody, most children will have an opinion about it. That opinion could fit easily on line seven of the pyramid for a minor variation. Modifying the format to allow opinions for selections such as this one adds interest:

THE CRAYON HALL OF FAME

RETIREMENT
FOR CRAYONS
IN EASTON, PENNSYLVANIA
FAREWELL TO OLD HUES
INTRODUCING BRIGHTER, BOLDER, NEW COLORS
TEAL, FUCHSIA, DANDELION, TANGERINE, CERULEAN, STRAWBERRY
THOUGH THE OLD HUES WERE GOOD HUES
IT WAS A MATTER OF TASTE AND ECONOMICS

Wednesday, June 13, 1990 The San Diego Union

Crayola introduces 8 new colors

Others will be retired to crayon Hall of Fame

Easton, Pa. - Responding to the bolder, brighter tastes of children, the makers of Crayola crayons said yesterday they are retiring eight standard colors and introducing eight new ones.

Starting next month, children around the world will be able to draw a teal blue ocean, a fuchsia azalea, a dandelion sun, a jungle green tree, a vivid tangerine tiger, a royal purple king's cloak, a cerulean (bright medium blue) sky and a wild strawberry strawberry.

To make room for the new hues, Binney & Smith Inc. is eliminating eight standard colors: maize, raw umber, blue gray, lemon yellow, green blue, orange red, orange yellow and violet blue. The elder shades will be enshrined this summer in Crayola's crayon Hall of Fame at its international headquarters in Easton.

It is the first time Binney & Smith has stopped production of any color and the first time since 1972, when eight fluorescent shades came on the market, that any new colors have been introduced.

Brad Drexler, a company spokesman, said the change was a matter of economics and customer tastes. "We are being more and more responsive to kids' needs. Maybe 10 to 15 years ago we did not look out for kids' needs," Drexler said. "There's always been a lot of competition in the crayon market. It's just a smart move for us to make.

"Because kids are (the) people using our products, we should be talking to the kids about what they like or do not like," he added.

And talk to kids they did. Company executives surveyed boys and girls around the nation and found that they liked bolder, brighter colors.

For the record, the most popular colors are red and black - red because it's a primary color and black is best for outlining. Boys seem to favor fluorescent colors and girls prefer pastels, Drexler said.

Four or more of the new colors will be available in boxes of 24, 32 and 48. The box of 64 will feature all eight new colors.

It took the company about 1 1/2 years to develop the new colors.

"When we laid all the colors out on a sheet, we looked for places in the color spectrum where we could improve the color offering by introducing brighter, bolder colors," Drexler said. "We looked for colors we could retire that wouldn't take away from the existing assortment by leaving colors completely void."

ROUND AND ROUND

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

This strategy involves a structured writing assignment which may or may not involve creative input, depending on the type of lesson. Because children will be "piggy-backing" on one another's ideas, **ROUND AND ROUND** also develops critical thinking skills. One particularly positive attribute of this strategy is that it requires students to be flexible as they adapt to each new paper.

ROUND AND ROUND may be used in any area of the curriculum where children are asked to "report" on a topic. It may be used to summarize units of study or to introduce them, by asking what students already know.

Ask each of your students to get a sheet of paper and have them take out a pencil or pen. This assignment can be structured in a variety of ways, but is dependent upon a writing prompt, question, issue or problem which can be responded to in sentence format. All cooperative group members are to start writing when the prompt is given and continue writing until a predetermined signal is seen or heard. At that signal, each student is to pass his paper to another group member (on the left, on the right, or the next number in numerical order) who will continue writing on the sheet passed until the predetermined signal is given again, at which time they will exchange once more. After everyone has had a chance to add to everyone else's paper, the activity should end with a summary sentence added by the paper's originator.

After this activity, the students will be eager to share the results both within their cooperative groups and with the entire class. There are many advantages to allowing time for discussion. The concept of ownership may initially be an issue which will concern students, but the fun and humor that the strategy engenders soon overshadows the ownership issue. To take advantage of the humorous aspects of this strategy, a follow-up to this activity could involve the group using their individual/ piggy-backed products to create a team product.

The examples which follow illustrate the wide-ranging uses of **ROUND AND ROUND.**

THE GREEN GRASS GROWING ALL AROUND

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

Poetry appreciation and poetry writing are frequently introduced in isolation as part of the language arts curriculum. To teach either appreciation or writing, some personal connection must be made for meaning to take place. The poem on the following page, "The Green Grass Growing All Around," is one known to many campers and scouts. Its repetitive phrases and familiar subject matter are wrapped in silliness as the speed at which it is read is increased. Help your students become familiar with the poem by using **CO-OP CHORAL READING** (see page 112), and then use the format of the poem as a structured writing assignment incorporating **ROUND AND ROUND**.

Introduce the idea by saying, *Let's take a few minutes and do a choral reading of "The Green Grass Growing All Around," just in our cooperative groups.* (One possible numbering method might be to number each line as follows, with the number corresponding to that numbered person in the cooperative group: 1,2,3, All; 1,2,3,4, All; 1, 2,3,4,1, All; 1,2,3,4,1, All; and the last stanza, 1,2,3,4,1,2,3, All). *What do you notice about the pattern of the poem?* (Spend some time discussing how the repetition works, how everything is listed...)

If we were to write something like this poem, what would be something you think it would be fun to write about? Think about beginning it in the same way, think about what the last line would be. Whatever the first line is, the second line has to describe it before the third line is written. What are some of your ideas?

Once the students have examined the poem and have had an opportunity to discuss possibilities, either select one of their suggestions or begin the poem for them. If you are studying a particular subject area which would lend itself to a poem of this sort, try that. (This activity can be done with one piece of paper and one pencil being passed around the group, or each group member can begin a poem and all students will have a paper and pencil).

(Continued Next Page)

The first line for your poem is:

There was a mouse lived in a house...

or...

As each contributor adds one thought to the poem and then passes it on, remember that the rhyming isn't terribly important, nor is a perfect pattern. Building fluency and flexibility and a framework for future efforts is important.

Summary:

To help students realize that each activity needn't result in a finished product, but can be done for its own sake or for longer range purposes, ask:

How did it feel to add to something someone else had written?
What was easy about this?
What was hard about this?
What would be fun to do next?

THE GREEN GRASS GROWING ALL AROUND

—Anonymous

There was a tree stood in the ground,
The prettiest tree you ever did see;
The tree in the wood, the wood in the ground,
And the green grass growing all around.

And on this tree there was a limb,
The prettiest limb you ever did see;
The limb on the tree, and the tree in the wood,
The tree in the wood, and the wood in the ground,
And the green grass growing all around.

And on this limb there was a bough,
The prettiest bough you ever did see;
The bough on the limb, and the limb on the tree,
The limb on the tree, and the tree in the wood,
The tree in the wood, and the wood in the ground,
And the green grass growing all around.

Now on this bough there was a nest,
The prettiest nest you ever did see;
The nest on the bough, and the bough on the limb,
The limb on the tree, and the tree in the wood,
The tree in the wood, and the wood in the ground,
And the green grass growing all around.

And in the nest there were some eggs,
The prettiest eggs you ever did see;
Eggs in the nest, and the nest on the bough,
The bough on the limb, and the limb on the tree,
The limb on the tree, and the tree in the wood,
The tree in the wood, and the wood in the ground,
And the green grass growing all around, all around,
And the green grass growing all around!

ALEXANDER AND THE TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE, NO-GOOD, VERY BAD DAY

Subject Area: Language Arts, Guidance

Directions:

Literature provides us with an extraordinary means for accessing feelings. Several wonderful children's books have been written by authors sensitive to the multitude of emotions and experiences children share. One of those books is *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. Judith Viorst manages to detail, from a first person perspective, Alexander's disappointing and somewhat traumatic experiences so that readers of all ages can relate to Alexander's feelings of mistreatment, outrage, and exasperation.

Many books serve similar purposes, this particular one is simply being used to illustrate the process. After reading it to your class, you will direct your students in the cooperative activity entitled, **ROUND AND ROUND**.

Each of your students will need a paper and pencil. Begin by saying:

Alexander did have a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day, didn't he? Have you ever had a day like that? Have you ever had a day when everything went wrong? Maybe you had a day where just one very important thing didn't turn out the way you wanted it to. Maybe you had a day where you were very disappointed. You may have lost something important to you, had a friend move away, someone mad at you, or maybe you didn't get to go somewhere you wanted to go. Think about it for a moment or two. When I tell you to begin writing, write one sentence which begins to tell about one event that happened on a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day of yours.

Allow adequate time for students to get their first thoughts down on paper and then ask them to stop by saying:

Finish the sentence you are on and then lay your pencils down. Pass your papers to the person on your right and write another sentence which continues to tell about that experience or another one.

(Continued Next Page)

Allow time for that second thought, then ask your students to pass their papers and write one more sentence about their very bad day. Continue, with papers rotating, until everyone in the group has had a chance to add to everyone else's paper. When papers return to their original owners, say:

Please read the **ROUND AND ROUND** *story on your paper. Think of a good summary sentence which would give a good ending to the story on your paper and write it.*

Summary:

The students will be eager to share the results of these "piggy-backed" creations. There will be an abundance of laughter about "bad" experiences, and a growing realization that everyone shares similar experiences. Ask:

What did you like about this activity?

What did you notice about the experiences you and your group have had?

A wonderful follow-up to **ROUND AND ROUND** would be the creation of a group product utilizing input from the group's responses to the prompt. This could be in the form of a story or a poem, or by using another of the cooperative strategies, such as **PYRAMID**.

"THE LONG RAIN"

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

Just as exposure to many kinds of poetry is necessary to teach poetry writing and appreciation, exposure to high-quality literature is necessary to teach its elements. Using Ray Bradbury's sensory-rich descriptions in the excerpted fragments below, **ROUND AND ROUND** will give your students an opportunity to practice descriptive writing which focuses on the senses. Duplicate the following from the short story, "The Long Rain," by Ray Bradbury. Ask one student in each cooperative group to read while the others listen. Have them focus on the descriptive words and how they appeal to the senses.

The rain continued. It was a hard rain, a perpetual rain, a sweating and steaming rain; it was a mizzle, a downpour, a fountain, a whipping at the eyes, an undertow at the ankles; it was a rain to drown all rains and the memory of rains. It came by the pound and the ton; it hacked at the jungle and cut the trees like scissors and shaved the grass and tunneled the soil and molted the bushes. It shrank men's hands into the hands of wrinkled apes; it rained a solid glassy rain, and it never stopped...two other men...wet and tired and slurred like clay that was melting...He had a face that once had been brown and now the rain had washed it pale, and the rain had washed the color from his eyes and they were white, as were his teeth, and as was his hair. He was all white. Even his uniform was beginning to turn white, and perhaps a little green with fungus. (How many million years since the rain stopped raining here on Venus?) ...They came to a river which lay wide and flat and brown...The white, white jungle with the pale cheese-colored leaves, and the earth carved of wet Camembert, and the tree boles like immense toadstools —everything black and white...The rain danced on their skin, on their wet uniforms...streamed from their noses and ears...They looked like stone fountains frozen in the jungle...fifteen billion tears, fifteen billion ornaments, jewels standing out against a white velvet viewing board (the rain)...

Say,

Within your group, discuss the colors Bradbury uses. Discuss the appeals to the sense of touch. What are the appeals to sight?

(Continued Next Page)

Assign each group one of the following scenes. There is to be only one pencil and one paper, each person is to write one sentence and then pass the paper. Allow enough time for the paper to circulate twice. The first person to write should also be the one to add a summary sentence.

Scenes to create:

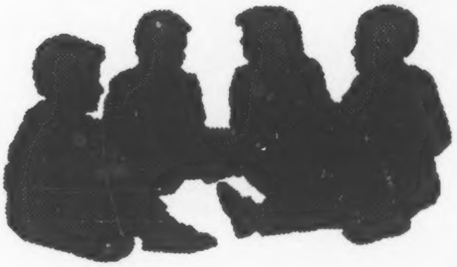
A scene which is blue, cold, and dry
A scene which is blue, hot, and dry
A scene which is green, wet, and hot
A scene which is red, hot, and wet
A scene which is black, cold, and wet
A scene which is gold, hot, and dry
A scene which is silver, cold, and wet

Summary:

With a little imagination, teaching about the senses and imagery using cooperative learning can be a lot more fun than a worksheet lesson. **ROUND AND ROUND** takes the pressure off children who need additional practice and stimulates the inventiveness of all participants. Ask:

How did it feel when you began writing?
How did it feel when you really started creating a scene?
What was helpful to you?
What didn't work?

Be sure to allow time for each group to "polish" its efforts and share its finished product.



MAILBOX

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

It is not surprising that self-esteem is directly related to communication skills. The interesting point to be made here is that listening to someone else not only tells them that they are worth listening to, it also provides an opportunity for learning. In the classroom, **MAILBOX** is a strategy which teaches children to listen, to have an opportunity to get interested in what someone has to say, and to gain self-confidence in their own expressive abilities.

This strategy can be explained to children using a mailbox as a metaphor for the process. As with many of the cooperative activities described in this book, this process can be integrated into any subject area where a group discussion or sharing of ideas will facilitate learning. This is group discussion with a difference, however. Your questions will be designed carefully to encourage the development of reflective thinking skills. Ask your students to think silently about what they'd like to say in response to your focus question or prompt. Ask them to "write a letter" about it in their imagination and "mail" it to the person seated to their right (or left, or across...). The next step is to have them tell that person what they said in the "letter."

The person who has received the "letter" must paraphrase or repeat the letter's contents before sending off his/her own letter. The process is repeated so that each cooperative group member states his/her perspective or shares information which is then paraphrased or restated by the person listening, before that person makes his/her own contribution. The procedure continues until each group member has participated.

Effective discussions require good listening and practice in listening helps to process information on deeper levels. Encourage the students to recognize how they feel when someone is listening carefully to them.

HUFF 'N PUFF

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

SHAREAROUND reading works well for stories with dialogue if they are lined off with the dialogue in mind. Instead of lining this selection by paragraph, line it off so that speaking parts are separated from the narrative. It takes very little time and the reading aloud becomes an exercise with a dual purpose—since your students will also become familiar with the text. As each group member, in numerical order, is given a turn to read, the novelty of the story's revised message, provides interest. The cooperative group becomes both audience and participants as students are provided time to read aloud, something that doesn't often happen as students move toward the intermediate grades and beyond.

Once the story has been read, **MAILBOX** provides a group discussion format for the sharing of ideas related to reactions to the story. Whenever this strategy is used, the questions which you formulate will be those designed to encourage both creative and critical thinking. They will be questions which are open-ended and require some reflection before answering.

For *Huff N Puff*, or for any selection you choose, the question may be written on the chalkboard for the entire class to view and think about before responding within their cooperative groups. Or it may be presented in this way:

In your groups today, you read a story written from a different perspective. This variation on ***The Three Little Pigs*** *certainly gives us something to think about. That's what I want you to do. Think about it for a moment or two. Think about the original version. What was the purpose of changing the story? What was the lesson in the original story? What was the lesson in this version?*

Before allowing the groups to begin, review the rules for **MAILBOX**. Remembering that the strategy asks students to "write a letter" in their imagination, remind the students that when they take their turns, they will be telling one another what they have "written" in their minds. It isn't necessary to say, "Dear Susie," but the narrative should flow more easily with the student knowing the intended audience is a member of the cooperative group.

(Continued Next Page)

After the first group member has responded:

I think the purpose of changing the story was to show how bad smoking is. The lesson in the original story was that you should build strong houses, the lesson in this story was that you shouldn't smoke.

The person who has received the "letter" must paraphrase it before making his/her own contribution. To paraphrase, suggest that a "you" statement be used. The student paraphrasing might then say,

You believe the story was changed to show smoking is bad. You thought the lesson in the original story was to show that strong houses are best and that in this story the lesson is you shouldn't smoke. I think the story was changed for the same reason except that they chose the perfect story to do it with. I think that the lesson in the original version was that if you plan, you can outwit someone. The lesson in this story was that smoking can change your plans.

There need be no particular order in which this is accomplished, except that the paraphraser must also be the one who will take the next turn, with the exception of the person who begins. That person has no one to paraphrase until the last person has responded.

Summary:

After everyone has had an opportunity to share and to paraphrase, ask the students:

How did it feel to have someone listening so carefully to you?

Did you hear some thoughts that hadn't occurred to you?

And, to continue in a thematic vein -

What other children's stories might be changed for similar purposes?

What kind of lessons do other favorite stories of yours teach?

HUFF 'N PUFF

One day, while the Big Bad Wolf was watching TV (which he loved) and smoking cigarettes (which he also loved) the announcer broke in with a news flash: **Three Little Pigs have just built a house of straw on Mistake Street!**

The Big Bad Wolf couldn't believe his ears. "A house of straw! THREE little pigs?"

He laughed out loud. His long white teeth gleamed.

"On Mistake Street, eh? I'll say it's a mistake."

He leaped out of his chair and began pacing the room. His mouth began to water.

"The thing I love most in the world - even more than watching TV, even more than smoking cigarettes - I LOVE the taste of freshly roasted pig. I'm going to have some. This very day."

He began to laugh again - great gulping, choking guffaws. He laughed so hard that he began to cough. And cough. And cough...

A little while later, the Big Bad Wolf was on his way toward Mistake Street. He moved quickly, nervously, along the shady side of the street, dodging behind trees and fences. He wanted to surprise the Three Little Pigs. So he was very quiet - except for a few coughs here and there, which he couldn't help. And he was almost invisible sneaking through the shadows - except for the telltale smoke from his cigarette, that floated along behind him.

Luckily.

For the Three Little Pigs heard the coughing and saw the smoke rising from behind the fence next door. They knew it was the Big Bad Wolf. They knew he was after them for his dinner.

Squealing with fright, the Three Little Pigs fled into the house, slammed the door and locked it - with two locks.

Just in time.

The wolf, a few seconds later, pounded on the door.

"Little Pigs, Little Pigs, let me in," he bellowed.

"Not by the hair of our chinny, chin, chins," they squeaked in terror. The wolf's face appeared at the window, scowling.

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

The Big Bad Wolf stepped back, stamped out his cigarette, and took a D-E-E-P breath...

To the Three Little Pigs huddled inside, the big deep breath sounded a little rattly and wheezy, but they were terrified anyway.

Then the Big Bad Wolf b-l-e-w o-u-t.

The Three Little Pigs braced themselves for a big wind.

Nothing.

Not even a breeze.

Outside, the Wolf was coughing and gasping.

"Come out, you little pipsqueaks. Or I'll (cough, cough) blow that house to the moon.

The Wolf took another D-E-E-P breath. He couldn't hold on to it, so it came right back as a weak little sputter - p-h-h-h-t.

Not a straw quivered.

Now the Three Little Pigs begin to giggle.

Again the Big Bad Wolf huffs and puffs, and tries to suck air into his sickly lungs. He is coughing and wheezing and rattling - and furious! Suddenly he is dizzy, and has no breath - from all that smoking. He falls - splat right on his long, mean-looking snout.

He doesn't get up.

Poor wolf. He's ruined for blowing houses down.

Inside, the Three Little Pigs dance and sing an old favorite: **"Who's afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?"**

NOBODY!

-Reprinted by permission American Cancer Society

THERE'S A NIGHTMARE IN MY CLOSET

Subject Area: Guidance, Language Arts

Directions:

Literature opens many doors, and this story literally does so. Mercer Mayer's *There's a Nightmare in My Closet* (New York, Dial Books for Young Readers, 1968), creates a humorous setting to deal with children's fear of the dark. The monsters in the closet are nightmares and the story shows fear conquered and the monster/nightmare tucked in and asleep with the small hero. And then the closet door opens again. It is the last page, with the new monster/nightmare emerging from the closet, which forms the basis for this **MAILBOX** activity.

After reading the book to your group or class, ask that the children return to their cooperative groups. Since **MAILBOX** is an opportunity for reflective thinking, listening, and responding, your question should be involving:

Think about our hero tucked into bed with his nightmare. He isn't afraid anymore, and there's no room for any more nightmares.

What will he do with this new one?

As each child responds and is paraphrased, everyone has an opportunity to participate. A possible scenario might be:

I think he'll tell the nightmare just to go back where it came from.

And the **MAILBOX** response:

Brent thinks he'll tell the nightmare just to go back where it came from. I think he'll tell his mom to get twin beds.

Summary:

For primary children, it is often a major feat to simply sit and listen. This strategy builds those skills because listening is the key to getting one's turn. Nonetheless, it is sometimes helpful to use an object, such as a stuffed animal, which can be passed from one child to another to indicate whose turn it is to speak.

GOODBYE HOUSE

Subject Area: Guidance, Language Arts, Social Studies

Directions:

Saying goodbye and moving away is a painful experience. This simple book, *Goodbye House*, by Frank Asch (New York, Simon &

-, 1986) provides the framework for a cooperative learning lesson which is certainly oriented toward the primary grades but could be adapted for older children.

The book takes a family of bears back through their empty house, saying goodbye to the memories in the house and then to each of the rooms. Papa Bear lovingly carries Baby Bear from attic to cellar to kitchen to backyard while Baby Bear tries to remember what he forgot. What he forgot is remembered as they drive away - he had forgotten to say goodbye.

Many, many children will identify with Baby Bear's sadness and this **MAILBOX** activity may help to assuage those feelings and provide, at the same time, an opportunity for children to see that their peers have also experienced the sense of disequilibrium and loss that moving can bring.

After reading the book to your students, ask them to just quietly think for a few moments about what (and perhaps, who) they would need to say goodbye to if they were to move. You might give some examples of your own, some special memories you have that you'd need to leave behind, special places in special rooms...

As each child in the group shares, another child in the group (usually in predetermined numerical order) paraphrases the statements that are made and then makes his/her own contributions.

Summary:

Questions to bring closure to this activity could include:

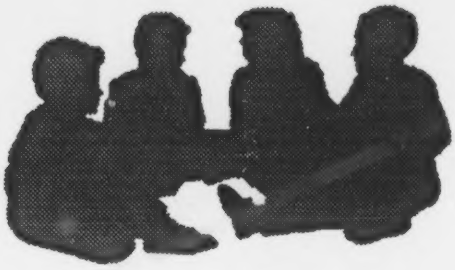
What was (or would be) the hardest to say goodbye to?

What was the easiest thing to say goodbye to?

What feelings did you have when you listened to the members of your group telling what they'd say goodbye to?

How did you feel when you were sharing your thoughts?

These questions could be asked of the entire group or asked and time provided for group discussion.



BRAINSTORMING

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

This strategy is familiar to most adults, but it is not one that is taught in most classrooms. Because its emphasis is to provide experiences in thinking creatively, **BRAINSTORMING** is very different from the "right-answeredness" required in traditional settings. It changes the atmosphere within the classroom, within cooperative groups, and encourages improvisation and divergence. It is very useful because four children quickly realize that they can manufacture many, many ideas in a short period of time. It is an ideal way to generate lots of ideas as long as the rules are followed. It can also be very noisy!

BRAINSTORMING develops group spirit because one idea generally sparks another, so that students are essentially creating their own motivation. Explain that they are to come up with a list of ideas or possible solutions to a problem. In order to make sure that this is a positive experience, carefully go over the following:

1. There will be a time limit. (This should be brief and should be set beforehand)
2. Ideas can be imaginative and unusual.
3. Put-downs or criticism of ideas is not allowed.
4. Piggy-backing, or extending one another's thoughts, is allowed.
5. A Recorder must record each idea so that it can be discussed later.

This strategy can be wonderfully non-threatening and positive. Team bonding is an added benefit and reinforces the ability of the group to work together. The ideas and thoughts generated often become the basis for further group work. Practicing this strategy increases its worth as children become comfortable with this form of interaction and learn to trust one another as they offer their ideas without fear of censure.

COLD, COLDER, COLDEST

Subject Area: Science

Directions:

Children often learn about scientific topics in the abstract because the material does not lend itself to experiments or interactive experiences. **BRAINSTORMING** can bring involvement and more meaning to written text by giving your students a different perspective. This strategy, while it is less structured than some of the others, does require a recorder to write down the group's ideas. Another option would be to pass one paper and one pencil around the group. Present the information in "Cold, Colder, Coldest," by providing one copy of it to each group and asking them to use the **SHAREAROUND** strategy to read it. Following that, try one or more of these suggestions for possible topics for a brainstorming session:

List as many geographic locations as you can think of which would profit from a freshwater iceberg.

"Cold" and "frigid" are just two adjectives which describe Antarctica. Generate a list of other adjectives which illustrate the environment of this continent.

Think of reasons why vacationers would like to visit this chilly place.

Scientists call Antarctica the "bottom of the world," or "The Ice," what additional names would be appropriate?

There are many kinds of scientists who work in Antarctica gathering data. List all the types of scientists who would have an interest in "The Ice."

Summary:

After adequate time has been allowed for all groups to generate all possible answers, solutions, and suggestions to one of the topics, allow time for sharing by a spokesperson from each group.

Use the information and ideas to move beyond the knowledge level by involving your students in another cooperative activity, **PYRAMID**, or in the creation of a poem. Further research on Antarctica could be completed in the library.

COLD, COLDER, COLDEST

Antarctica can justly claim to be the most superlative of continents. It is the highest, windiest, coldest, driest, iciest, and remotest place on earth. The scientific workers who frequent the "bottom of the world" refer to it fondly as "The Ice." It is a large landmass 98 percent covered with ice. That ice holds about 70 percent of the world's fresh water in its frozen grip.

The three climatic regions could be named cold, colder, and coldest. The interior is extremely cold with little precipitation. Coastal areas are somewhat milder with more snowfall, while the peninsula is relatively warmer with heavy precipitation.

Since the continent reflects 80 to 90 percent of incoming solar radiation back to space, the Antarctic would never be the first choice of vacationing heat-seekers. This frigid environment has created an immense continental ice cap which has an average depth of more than a mile.

Ice shelves, formed when glaciers creep to the sea, protrude into the surrounding icy waters and stay as permanent structures until mountainous hunks break off, or calve, and float into the sea as icebergs. Like snowflakes, each iceberg is an individual. From the ten to fifteen meter "growlers" (named for the noises they make while breaking up), to monsters the size of the state of Delaware, icebergs wander at will through the frigid waters of the Southern Sea.

Freshwater-starved nations have proposed towing giant bergs to their coastal waters to provide fresh water. They believe that even after a two or three month trip, at least one-half of the iceberg would remain.

NEW AND IMPROVED

Subject Area: Social Studies

Directions:

BRAINSTORMING is a terrific strategy to use with children to reinforce their involvement in their own learning. When the strategy can be related to subject matter, it becomes even more meaningful. Instances for use in the classroom certainly don't need to be contrived because there are countless situations when solutions to problems or multiple ideas are required. The "What if?" questions that relate to historical situations, scientific experiments, and discussions of literature illustrate some uses.

The example used here relates to "On Location" (see page 153) and is an ideal follow-up to that group endeavor. During the debriefing of that activity, students were asked, What would you change?

Go over the rules for **BRAINSTORMING** with your class. You may want to say:

I noticed that when you finished your islands yesterday, some of you were not very satisfied with how your island looked. Today, I'd like you to brainstorm some ideas for having things turn out differently. What would you change? Choose someone to be a recorder and think of as many ideas as you can which would improve on yesterday's island. In other words, if you were to create a new island, what would be different? How would you create an island that you would like better? You have ten minutes.

Summary:

Be sure to keep an eye on the clock. Adherence to a strict time limit keeps groups "on task" and prevents the possibility of less-than-purposeful behavior. After the ten minutes have elapsed and you have stopped the groups, ask them to go over their lists and agree upon some of their best ideas. Ask them to circle those ideas. Ask representatives from the groups to share some of their "best" ideas. Say:

What do you notice about your "best" ideas?

Are there many similarities?

How did you feel about ***BRAINSTORMING*** *solutions?*

What was difficult about it?

What was good about it?

A positive ending to this activity could include a "re-do" of their islands. A group-generated story reflecting the title of this activity would also provide a reason for writing.

WHAT COLOR IS QUIET?

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

Not only is **BRAINSTORMING** a great motivator, it works across the curriculum, requires little or no preparation, and it provides for the direct involvement which is essential to a child's learning. Brainstorming, also known as divergent production, has been a tactic used in gifted classrooms for many years because it is considered a higher level thinking skill, one which increases creativity by increasing fluency. While it has often been used in isolation, with brainstorming activities taking place just for the sake of brainstorming, as a cooperative learning strategy it differs - the focus is on relevancy.

So, how does one use **BRAINSTORMING** and make it meaningful? This lesson illustrates how to use the strategy to create an anticipatory set and to follow through with a related lesson. Ask the children to brainstorm as many color words as they can. Tell them to think of all of their favorite colors and their not-so-favorite colors. Remind them to think about color words which they've seen on crayons, and colors that they see in nature. Be sure to go over the rules of brainstorming before you have them begin. The children's answers can be given verbally or written on a single piece of paper which is rapidly passed with a pencil from person to person.

Brainstorming is most successful when a time limit is set, so be sure to set one and to perhaps put the ending time up on the chalkboard. Allow groups to share their lists with the entire class. Praise and positive comments for unusual color names or quantity of color names is always a good tactic to encourage future efforts.

To expand upon the color theme after the brainstorming has taken place, ask your students to think about the question you are going to ask. Ask:

What color do you think of when you think of noise?

Then, using a **SHAREAROUND** format, tell your students to share their thoughts with one another. Use any of the following

(Continued Next Page)

questions to move into the second phase of the activity. With one of the questions on the board, groups may brainstorm responses and rationales:

What color is noise?
What color is quiet?
What color are nightmares?
What color are nice dreams?
What is the color of a storm?
What is the color of love?
What is the color of anger?
If you could hear green, how would it sound?

Obviously, with all the responses your students will generate to questions such as those, you won't want to waste an opportunity. Consider assigning a cooperatively written haiku based on their responses to one of the questions. (A haiku is a Japanese verse form of three unrhymed lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllables respectively).

Summary:

The use of a simple brainstorming activity to create a mindset for any lesson which follows (in this case, haiku, metaphors, or synectics ("making the familiar strange"), is a strategy which permeates much good teaching. Consider the newspaper selection, "Crayola introduces 8 new colors." (see page 74) and the two lessons related to it (see pages 73 and 149) as added ways to illustrate teaching with a thematic focus.

SONG OF THE COLORADO

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

The use of **BRAINSTORMING** to set the stage for a specific lesson is one way of bringing meaning to a learning situation. In this case, the poem "Song of the Colorado," by Sarah Bixby-Smith, inspired the idea for the cooperative group brainstorming. This poem has a dual thematic focus in addition to the use of personification. Allowing children to explore from the poem's perspective, ask:

In what ways can a river rule the land?

Be sure that each group has a Recorder to record each idea. Set a time limit of approximately four to five minutes. Then,

In what ways can man conquer water?

Again, groups should record all of their ideas.

Allow each group's spokesperson to share the group's ideas. Then, provide a copy of the poem on the next page for each group. Allow time for discussion within cooperative groups as they react to the poem.

Summary:

After everyone has had an opportunity to discuss the poem, ask the children:

In what ways were your ideas similar to the poet's ideas?

In what ways were your ideas different?

Who was the "I" in the first part of the poem?

Who was the "I" in the second part?

The word, "Colorado," means red, in Spanish. What reference is made to red in the poem?

How are water and radiance related? What does the poet mean when she refers to water as a Wizard?

Extension activities which would enrich this lesson could include researching and locating more poems focused on nature. Your students, in cooperative groups, could emulate the personification aspect of the poem, using some of their own ideas to write group poems. To build the skills of **CONSENSUS**, you might ask:

In one sentence, what is the central idea of "Song of the Colorado?"

And, as a final thought, perhaps conduct a choral reading.

SONG OF THE COLORADO

This is the song of the river,
The great Colorado:

I am red with the dust of the earth
I have torn in my fury;
Deep is the canyon I have gashed
As I sped to the sea.
When the snows in the mountains
Melt far in the northlands I rage;
I flood in the southlands the desert,
The hayfield, the orchard.
I am mighty. I rule.

This is the song of the conqueror,
The Spirit of Man:

With labor of hands
And mighty machines of my making,
This wild crimson river
Untamed in its swift rushing torrent
I conquer and use;
Make slave of Water, the Wizard,
And lead under leash to my cities
Radiance and power.
I am the Spirit of Man
I conquer.

-from The Bending Tree
by Sarah Bixby Smith
1931, by permission

PROCRASTINATION

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Depending on the circumstances, delays can be seen as both negative and positive. For example, the postponement of a trip to Disney World has a vastly different effect on a child than that same child's decision to procrastinate cleaning his/her bedroom. In the classroom, there is a delay which can be planned and which few students will debate. You may choose to announce this delay by saying, "I've decided to postpone the test until next week..." **PROCRASTINATION** is a strategy which offers controlled delaying tactics. It allows for deferral of testing in order to provide structured time for both study and review. While it is difficult to completely eliminate the tension that many children experience with tests, you can help children tame the panic by making use of research findings which stress the need for repetitive study opportunities and frequently spaced reviews. **PROCRASTINATION** provides a test-type format which promotes learning.

This activity begins as an independent activity, so each group member will need a sheet of paper and a pen or pencil. Unless your students are accustomed to the concept of a quiz with no grade attached to it, you may need to explain that by procrastinating giving the actual test, they will have an opportunity to practice concentration and also how to learn from others. **PROCRASTINATION** is based on the assumption that subject matter has been previously introduced, either in traditional lecture format or by a reading assignment.

Everything that takes place does so within prescribed time constraints. You may wish to adjust the time allowed for each phase of this activity, but the fact that there are time limitations increases the children's efforts. Ask your students to review in their minds the main points of the previous days' lessons and, when they are ready, to write down everything of importance that they can remember. Three minutes are allotted. When the time is up, all pencils must be put away. The next three minutes are spent sharing their papers. Call out, "Change papers" after one minute and repeat two times so that each group member has time to read what every other group member has written. No notes may be taken. The last minute ends with the request that each student have his/her own paper.

The final phase also allows three minutes, during which the students are to add any information they've read to their own papers.

Review of subject matter is a part of classroom teaching which should be habitual in outstanding classrooms. However, with today's curriculum demands it is frequently relegated to just another homework assignment where ineffective study habits do not promote learning. In a very short time period in the classroom, this strategy can build study techniques, teach paraphrasing, and encourage the interweaving of old material with new.

THE SEVEN WONDERS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Subject Area: History

Directions:

This type of lesson perfectly illustrates the reason why **PROCRASTINATION** is an efficient review and study strategy. The material which follows forms the basis for the original presentation or lesson. The information could have been easily presented in report format by individual students, in a traditional lecture-style format by you, the teacher, independently read about, or viewed on a video. In addition, another cooperative strategy, such as **SHAREAROUND**, could be used to present the material.

On a day following the initial presentation, the students should be asked to:

Review in your minds the main points of the lesson on "The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World." In addition, to remembering each of the seven wonders, think about one or two facts related to it.

You have three minutes to write down everything you can remember about this subject.

Time is up. Put your pencils away.

Pass your paper to the person on your left. You have one minute to read the paper passed to you. Pass the paper you are reading to the person on your left. You have one minute. This is the last time. You have one minute. Now, take your paper back.

You have three minutes to write down anything else you've learned about this subject.

Summary:

You may wish to allow individual students to respond to questions such as these:

What did you recall when you just thought about the seven wonders of the ancient world?

What happened as you were writing about them?

How were you helped by reading the other papers?

How did you feel at the end of the activity?

What would you change?

It is of great value to allow discussion time in order to further reinforce the information. Future assignments related to more in-depth study might be made on a group basis. Use of the same information with the strategy, **TAKE A NUMBER**, would provide another form of repetition and spaced review.

THE SEVEN WONDERS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

If you had been a tourist in ancient Greece or Rome a few thousand years ago, you might have been told to travel to each of the following destinations in order to see what were then considered extraordinary works of art and architecture. These structures were regarded with awe primarily because of their huge size, but today, only the Pyramids of Egypt still stand.

The Pyramids of Egypt at Giza, built between 2700-1000 B.C., are the oldest of the seven wonders and were built as burial places for Egyptian rulers. These tombs had square bases and four triangular sides and were built with blocks of stone which each weighed more than two tons. There were no cranes or heavy building equipment so all construction was done by teams of men working together.

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were built by King Nebuchadnezzar II about 600 B.C. for his favorite wife. In actuality, the gardens didn't really hang, but were a series of planted terraces progressing upward in a mountain-like structure and included flowers, trees, and avenues of palms. They were irrigated by water from the Euphrates River. They were easily visible from the city of Babylon and existed for over two hundred years.

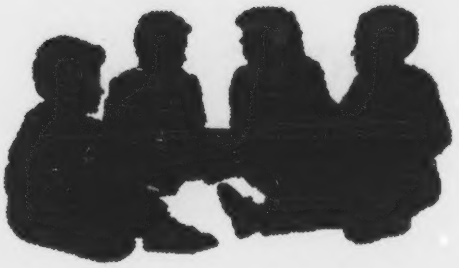
The Statue of Zeus, king of the Greek gods, was built in the middle of the 5th century B.C. Built by the sculptor, Phidias, the thirty-foot sculpture of ivory and gold was the central feature of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, Greece. The statue, which showed Zeus seated on his throne, was struck by lightning and destroyed. It is only from ancient coins that we have an idea what this majestic statue must have looked like.

The Temple of Artemis, at Ephesus in Greece, was built to honor the Greek goddess of nature, Artemis, called Diana by the Romans. It was said to have taken 120 years to complete after contributions were made from all the cities of Asia. The temple was set on fire and destroyed by the Goths in AD 262.

The Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, got its name from King Mausolus whose wife, Artemisia, had Greek architects build this tomb. On top of its huge rectangular base stood thirty-six columns and thirty-six statues which held a pyramid-shaped roof. At the top of that roof was a four-horse chariot in which were statues of the king and queen. This structure was so famous that any monumental tomb became known as a mausoleum.

The Colossus of Rhodes was a giant bronze statue representing the Greek sun-god Helios and was supposed to be over 100 feet high. It was erected about 280 B.C. to guard the entrance to the harbor at Rhodes and to commemorate the successful defense of Rhodes against its enemies. It stood guard for approximately fifty-five years, at which time it was toppled by an earthquake.

For more than a thousand years, the Pharos of Alexandria located on an island in Alexandria, Egypt, guided ships into that Egyptian harbor. It was over four hundred feet high and made of white marble. This famous lighthouse used mirrors to reflect the light of a fire at the top of its stone tower until it, too, was severely damaged by an earthquake.



HIGHLIGHT

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Highlighting pens are not only a wonderful invention when used for the purpose of studying, they can be used productively as a teaching tool as well. **HIGHLIGHT** encourages children to pay close attention to the written word and challenges them to make decisions which have relevance to lesson objectives. The sharing of thoughts which is a direct by-product of this strategy gives children the occasion to listen and be listened to.

There is a certain "power" which children feel when they are allowed, even instructed, to mark text, so each student will need both a highlighter pen and a copy of the selection to be studied. What they will be marking will be up to you, depending on what the objective of the lesson is. Using a selection or excerpt of quality literature, you may wish to ask children to locate examples of descriptive phrases, thus the process becomes integral to the learning experience. As the children work through the document and then discuss their choices within their cooperative groups, the individual and collective involvement brings meaning to the experience.

HIGHLIGHT first gets learners intrigued because of the novelty of the use of the markers, but the strategy provides teachers a lesson-specific format which keeps children's interest alive. As mentioned, one way to use the markers is to ask the children to highlight phrases in a story that are especially descriptive, or to find lines in a poem that appeal to them, or words in an essay that detail action. To teach literary devices - metaphors, similes, personification, imagery, alliteration, onomatopoeia, etc., ask the children to find and highlight all the examples they can.

This becomes a cooperative lesson after enough time has been allotted for the initial search. Children in cooperative groups may share, in structured numerical order, the reasons for their choices and through discussion, what was abstract becomes concrete. With slight variations, the technique used in **HIGHLIGHT** can be applied across the curriculum.

This process may be followed by a total group discussion which might include the question: *What did you learn about (the subject of the lesson) when you worked together?* Generalizing this new information, increased awareness while they are reading, and transfer to their own writing are added benefits of this strategy.

"THE STORY OF ROSTEVAN, KING OF ARABS"

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

In the name of "Language Appreciation," generations of students have been bored to death. It is no easy thing to teach, and it certainly cannot be done without using the very best examples. **HIGHLIGHT** begins with a little magic - a simple highlighter pen. That pen, and the literature you select are integral to being effective. Whatever literature is chosen, it must be age-appropriate. This poem, an excerpt from a book-length saga, might be used with sixth grade students, but is most appropriate for junior high and/or high school age students. The imagery is sophisticated and allows for a variety of assignments, but it is important to remember that there is a fine line between over-analyzing and developing appreciation.

Another point which must be made is that poetry should not be presented in a vacuum. This particular poem would be wonderfully relevant were the history of the Soviet Union being studied. For our purposes, it provides an excellent example.

Explain to your students that Rostevan was a king, that the poet, Rustaveli, used a great many adjectives to describe him. You may wish to read this powerful poem aloud, emphasizing those words. Ask them to use their highlighters and mark as many adjectives as they can find which portray him. (Tell them to concentrate on the first and third stanzas and to use their dictionaries to check parts of speech.)

Next, students in their cooperative groups may compare the words that have been highlighted, marking any that have been missed. (If mistakes have been made, there are no grades given and a clean copy of the poem can be provided later.) There are many beautiful phrases incorporating personification, metaphors, and similes; ask your pupils to find and highlight three or four which they particularly liked.

The group interaction occurs after the highlighting does. In numerical order, students share within their groups the reasons for their choices. The meaning behind the phrases can be discussed; conjecture and inferences are encouraged. Greater clarification can occur at a later time during whole-group discussion, or each group can be assigned a stanza to "translate" and explain to the entire group.

Summary:

Sharing beautiful language with your students in a structured and interactive way is more than just exposure; it is teaching. Ask:

How did you feel about telling your group the phrases you liked?

How did you like hearing about your friends' choices?

What happened during the time when you were discussing the meanings of some of the phrases?

Shota Rustaveli lived in the Soviet republic of Georgia hundreds of years ago. This is part of poem called, "The Knight in the Panther's Skin," which he wrote to tell the story of the Arabs who conquered Georgia in the 7th century. Rustaveli lived in the 12th century and was in love with Queen Tamar who ruled Georgia during that time.

THE STORY OF ROSTEVAN, KING OF ARABS

Rostevan ruled in Arabia, a monarch exalted and mighty,
Fortunate, noble, farseeing, wise in council and judgment;
The hosts he commanded were countless, he, the invincible warrior;
His speech was fluent and gracious, his bounty and wisdom boundless.

He had one fair daughter, bright as the sun in its glory,
Shedding radiant beams, ravishing all who beheld her.
Hearts and minds were enslaved, all bowed down to her beauty.
Even the sage and the poet were deprived of speech in her presence.

Tinatin, fairest of maidens, grew to be fairest of women;
The sun itself in the sky paled above her in envy.
Rostevan summoned his viziers, graciously ranged them before him;
Proud, majestic, yet mild, he wanted their judgment and counsel.

"We are assembled," he said, "to discuss and counsel together.
The sun of my days is set, a moonless night is before me.
The full-blown rose must scatter the face of the earth with its petals.
But the bud on the branch unfolds, filling the garden with fragrance."

"Mine is the burden of age, sorest affliction of mortals;
The footsteps of death draw near me and I must yield up my spirit.
Light can no longer exist when the shadow of night overtakes it.
Take for your sovereign, my daughter, whom even the sun cannot rival."

The viziers answered: "O King! Speak not of age and of darkness!
One bad counsel from you is better than a hundred good counsels from others.
You have done well to unload your heart of its onerous burden;
She who out-shines the sun we name our monarch and ruler.

"Woman she is, but a woman born to rule over a kingdom.
Truly our hearts declare her worthy to be our sovereign.
Her noble deeds, like her radiance, shed brightness and warmth like sunshine.
The lion's whelp is a lion, be it male or female."

FOR THE BIRDS

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

The ability to generate humor and teach at the same time may elude teachers of advanced calculus, but in the elementary classroom there are often opportunities when humor can be used to "get a lesson across." The article, "Whackers ward off the birds well," tickled my funny bone when I first read it, and I have used it many times since. Newspapers frequently have articles which have been written tongue-in-cheek, and the sports section, in particular, is rife with instances of figurative language.

To begin, duplicate copies of the article so that **SHAREAROUND** may be used within your cooperative groups to read it, paragraph by paragraph, in numerical order. Be prepared for some giggling and some surprise— "You mean we get to read something funny?"

Provide each student with a highlighter pen and the instructions:

After you have read the article aloud in your group, reread the article to yourself. Use the highlighter to mark phrases that are particularly funny to you. Often they will be "plays on words," when the writer is playing with words to be funny. Find as many examples of funny phrases as you can.

Allow three to four minutes of individual work and then ask your students to share their findings with their groups. They may share, in structured numerical order, or in discussion, their choices and the reasons behind their choices.

Possible examples include:

"Business is flocking to him"
"Foul signatures the fowl left behind"
"Get his business flying..."
"Try hatching another idea"

Summary:

Increased awareness of the uses of language is evident as children are given the opportunity to mark a page with a highlighter as they locate amusing phrases. Another possibility in this article would have been to locate examples of alliteration. There are several. **PYRAMID** would be the ideal strategy to showcase some of those examples. Creating a drawing of the bird whacker and renaming it are other extension possibilities. **HIGHLIGHTER** becomes a means to an end—that of developing appreciation and awareness, in a wide variety of subject areas.

Monday, January 15, 1990 The San Diego Union

Whackers Ward Off the Birds Well

The battle was truly against a bunch of birdbrains, but it still took Rod Wales the better part of his career to outsmart them all.

Over at Wales Whacker Works, Wales devised a way to stop birds - especially the common urban pigeon - from having their way with the nation's billboards, buildings, statues and signs.

Wales Bird Whackers do as their name suggests. They whack birds away from any protected surface. This is done via two aluminum poles that whirl at precisely 30 mph.

"It doesn't kill them, just stuns 'em a little, like a spanking," said Wales from Whacker Works headquarters in Pasadena.

Bird Whackers move in the manner of a cheerleader twirling two batons at once, only powered by small motors instead of teen-age girls.

Business, he says, is flocking to him. Thousands of Wales' whackers whirl atop billboards across the country, mostly in Southern California - including San Diego, where he began his war on pigeons.

Wales, who is 53, spent 35 years in the billboard business in San Diego. He started here as one of the guys who put them up and ended as a supervisor who had to listen to all the complaints about the foul signatures the fowl left behind.

"People were always complaining, 'Do something with the birds,'" Wales said. So he tried every anti-pigeon device known to man and advertising.

He tried installing sharp barbs on the billboard ledges, but the pigeons just straddled them.

He tried a device designed to give birds the hotfoot, but they outsmarted that too.

Then he tried nailing artificial owls atop billboards, hoping the bird of prey would scare pigeons off - to no avail. "It takes them about a week to realize the owl doesn't move and then they start going right on top of it," Wales said.

"There's been a world of things invented to stop them, but the birds get smart enough to figure a way around it," he said, ever respectful of his enemy.

So Wales started experimenting on birdproofing in his La Mesa backyard, in between work and running an antique store and costume shop. The bird business became so absorbing he stopped tinkering with his other backyard projects: an innovative automotive mudflap and easily installed snow chains.

The bird whackers took time. He put fishing poles on a motor and started them a-twirling - and Rod Wales had conquered the pigeon problem, permanently, he hopes.

Wales is flying high in the "bird business," what he calls his new career. The billboard industry loves Bird Whackers, and even Hollywood has taken notice of his genius. Wales' whackers protect the Paramount Studios famous globe marking the entrance to the studio that brought the world Mae West, star of "My Little Chickadee."

About eight months ago, business got good enough for Wales to quit his day job in the billboard industry and fly solo.

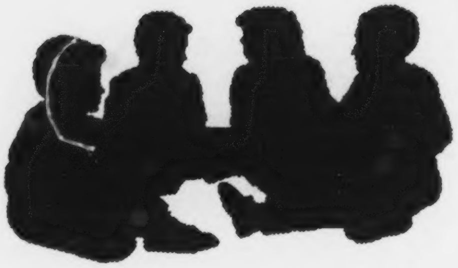
A Wales Bird Whacker sells for about $225, and comes with a one-year guarantee. For larger companies, he leases his whackers.

Business, he says, flocks to him. He won't say how much money he's making, only that thousands of his pigeon-foiling devices are at this moment whirling above billboards throughout the Southwest and are gaining a perch on the East Coast as well. He had to hire four people to help him out, he says, and sales are so good he hasn't even bothered to advertise.

Still, he doesn't see feathers in his future.

His plan is to get his business flying, then sell out and pursue his revolutionary mudflaps, or snow chains, or maybe trying hatching another idea.

Who knows?" Wales said. "There's so many things out there that need to be straightened out."



FOUR SENTENCE SUMMARY

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

This is an after-reading activity in which students collaborate to reconstruct what they have read. The goal is to summarize a narrative story in four sentences. Each sentence should contain the most important information and each cooperative group must reach consensus about what they want each sentence to say. It is important to model the process (described below) with the entire class prior to asking the groups to do it independently.

Briefly, **FOUR SENTENCE SUMMARY**, begins with a sentence which discusses the characters. The second sentence describes the setting. The third sentence outlines the problem, and the fourth sentence states the resolution. You may wish to use the chalkboard to demonstrate the process. It is important that you also discuss elaborating (adding adjectives, adverbs, etc.) and refining (editing, checking for noun-verb agreement, etc.) as you model this strategy.

These are instructions for the class:

1. **Character**—Write your own character sentence on your own paper. Share your sentence with your group. Discuss, compare, plan a group "best" sentence. Choose a recorder to write the group sentence on the group's paper.

2. **Setting**—Write your own setting sentence on your own paper. Try to include both where and when. Share your sentence with your group. Discuss, compare, plan a "best" sentence. The recorder writes the group sentence on the group's paper (to make a paragraph).

3. **Problem**—Write your own problem sentence on your own paper. Write about the most important overall problem or problems. Share your sentence with your group. Discuss, compare, plan a "best" sentence. The recorder continues the paragraph on the group's paper.

4. **Resolution**—Write your own resolution sentence on your paper. If there was more than one problem, include all the resolutions. If there was no resolution, write your prediction of the resolution. Share your sentence with your group. Discuss, compare, plan a "best" sentence. The recorder continues the paragraph on the group paper.

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After the four sentences have been completed. The group works together to revise and edit. One group member reads the group's paragraph aloud and more ideas and descriptions are added if they are needed. Words and ideas which are repeated may be replaced and/or deleted. Ask the groups to listen carefully as a group member reads it aloud to see how it flows. Check for sentence structure (run-ons, incomplete sentences) and other mechanics (spelling, capitalization, grammar, etc.). Every group member then needs to write a perfect copy of the group's consensus summary, agreeing upon and adding a title to the paragraph.

Each student's copy should be proofread by each group member since only one paper will be graded for the team. They should be paper-clipped together and turned in.

Collaborative group efforts may be shared with the class by each group. When the summary paragraphs are graded, each group member gets the same grade. The interpersonal skills that develop as consensus evolves are of equal benefit as those academic skills which are the more obvious.

THE CHICKEN COOP HOSPITAL

Subject Area: Social Studies

Directions:

Invite your students to first use **SHAREAROUND**, each taking a paragraph or section, to read the biographical information about Albert Schweitzer. The **FOUR SENTENCE SUMMARY** strategy provides a format for capsulizing important facts, and for that reason, it is particularly functional when students are to be looking for significant information.

The first sentence is to be about the main character. It should first be written individually by each group member and then discussed and added-to until a group sentence can be agreed upon. Since the story has pets mentioned and some details which may be confusing, there may need to be some group discussion for clarification.

The second sentence is to be about the setting. The "where" part of the setting is easy, but the span of time (over fifty years) is not mentioned until almost the last paragraph and may take some time to ferret out. Encourage descriptive words to elaborate upon the jungle setting.

The third sentence is intended to outline a "problem." In this instance, there is no problem, but there was an underlying reason why Dr. Schweitzer went to Africa and stayed. If your students are having difficulty, tell them to eliminate the word "problem," and substitute a reason.

The fourth sentence is described as a resolution sentence to "solve" the problem. These sentences may differ from group to group, but should connect logically to the third sentence and supply a feeling of closure to the paragraph/summary.

Adding descriptive words and revising are the work of the group, following agreement on the four sentences to be included in the group product. Proofreading is important as this assignment is one which is given a group grade.

Summary:

The selection provided is essentially a vignette and yet it is filled with interesting, smaller stories. Those small stories - the adventure with the hippopotamus, the pets, the boy who needed the operation, winning the Nobel Prize - provide ideas for additional cooperative projects. Even with the small amount of information given, **PYRAMID** would be a strategy useful for telling those stories. There have been many books written about Albert Schweitzer's life, and it could be researched more in-depth on an individual or group basis.

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

Even in his worst dreams, he had never pictured himself in a scene like this one. There he was, heading downriver in a small canoe in the middle of an African jungle. He wondered if the hippopotamus, staring at them from eyes just above the water level, was also thinking he was having a bad dream.

"Joseph," he said to the man rowing the small boat downriver, "do you suppose that hippopotamus is worried at all about us?"

"Dr. Schweitzer," Joseph answered, "that hippopotamus doesn't care about us at all. He could come up underneath this boat and tip us into the river with all the crocodiles and electric eels, and he'd never even think twice about it."

"Then, Joseph, I think perhaps we should detour very carefully and go around that hippo."

Watching carefully for huge, dark, moving shapes, Joseph paddled on and Dr. Schweitzer thought of his hospital in the middle of the African jungle. Because it was near the Equator, it was hot there all year. The rainy season often brought sixty inches or more of rain. Surrounded by spiders, beetles, mosquitoes, deadly snakes, leopards, elephants, and gorillas, Dr. Schweitzer knew it must be the only hospital of its kind in the world. "It is certainly the only one that had been a chicken coop first," he thought.

Joseph began paddling toward shore and Dr. Schweitzer could see Tecla and Isabel, his pet pigs, sleeping in the dirt yard. He knew that his cats, Albertine, Pansy, and Sisi, were in the house sleeping on the desk. Tristan, Parsifal, and Lohengrin, his pelicans, were on the shore watching the canoe approach.

He had chosen to live in the African jungle despite the warnings of his friends. "Africa is one of the unhealthiest places in the world! There are witch doctors! There are cannibals! They have terrible diseases - leprosy and sleeping sickness!" his friends warned.

But, any kind of suffering bothered Albert Schweitzer. The smallest of animals received his love and so did the thousands of African natives he helped in his hospital.

When he had been a young man, in his twenties, he already had had many different careers; he had been a minister and a musician, a writer and a college professor. He had lived in Europe then. The same friends who had tried to convince him not to go to Africa had also said to him, "You are so successful with

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your concerts and your lectures, Albert, how can you even think of starting medical school now?"

But he had started medical school, and he had become a doctor. It took great courage for him to make that decision, but it felt right and he had done it. He made a choice to live his life for others. "I could not just be talking about caring for others," he wrote to his friends, "my medicine is putting into practice the love I feel for all living things."

Can you picture the kind of hospital Dr. Schweitzer had in the middle of that jungle? Most hospitals are spotlessly clean, the lighting is very bright, the equipment is new and shiny. Dr. Schweitzer's hospital had a roof that leaked, no electric lighting, mattresses made of woven grasses, and he and his patients couldn't even talk to one another because they didn't speak the same language. He knew what kinds of medicine to use so that wounds and infections would heal, but he also used kind words, for he knew that the seeds of kindness could never be lost.

He had a mane of bushy hair and a big bushy mustache, too. Underneath that bushy mustache was usually a smile. It was his smile and kindness that overcame the fear of the natives he was treating. "There was a young boy who needed an operation," Dr. Schweitzer told his friends. "I have never seen anyone look so scared. He was sure that he had been given over to cannibals. We didn't speak the same language. How was he to understand that I was going to help him? I smiled. He smiled. I think my smile relaxed him. I operated and he got better. I think about how important that smile was."

When Albert Schweitzer was seventy-seven, he won the Nobel Peace Prize, one of the highest honors anyone can receive. Along with the honor, he was awarded a money prize of $30,000.00. He used that money to add a building to his hospital.

Dr. Schweitzer's dream of helping others was a reality for over fifty years. The hen house hospital he started grew into a settlement of over forty-five buildings. There were houses and storage areas, there were vegetable gardens and there were orchards. It wasn't the fanciest place you've ever seen, but the surroundings were what the natives were used to and the doctor could climb a ladder and fix the roof when it leaked. In fact, when he was in his eighties, he was still climbing ladders and fixing what needed to be fixed.

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS REVISITED

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

An after-reading activity, such as **FOUR SENTENCE SUMMARY**, is ideal for use with stories which the children have had an opportunity to become familiar. Because of the group interaction, the need to reach consensus, and the process of synthesizing information, a great deal of higher level thinking occurs.

The process begins with each child independently creating each of the four sentences. One at a time, as each sentence is created, sentences are shared, changes and additions are made, and a "best" group sentence is chosen and recorded on a fifth sheet, which becomes the group's product.

This lesson, or a similar one, could be used as a model to teach the process to the entire class before groups attempt it independently.

For "Huff'N Puff" (see page 86) one might begin in this way:

Who was the main character in the story? What would you like to say about him? What are the two things he loves to do? Who else was in the story? What did the author say about the Three Little Pigs? Do you want to mention them in this sentence?

There were several problems in this story. They seemed to contribute to the big problem. What were some of the small problems? Think about how the wolf tried to blow the house down, and how the pigs thought they'd be dinner.

The last sentence is supposed to tell how the story's problems were solved, but there really weren't any solutions for the wolf, were there? What problem was solved for the pigs? You may want to say how you feel about the resolution of the story when you write that last sentence.

Since you are modeling this lesson for the entire class, this might be the point where you return to the lesson's intent by having each group's recorder make a copy of the sentences on the board (*If you are a number four, will you please be the recorder today?*), and have the group work together to decide on its final paragraph. Ask them to edit for spelling, capitalization, and other mechanics. Remind them that they can add more ideas and descriptions to the class-produced existing sentences. All team members must make a copy of the group's final draft.

Summary:

Whenever this strategy is used, group products vary widely. It is a good idea to allow time for groups to share their products with the entire class. For those children who have had little success creating cohesive paragraphs, this activity provides experiences in a situation where success is always the outcome.

CO-OP CHORAL READING

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

To be able to expose children to the richness of literature and to cultivate appreciation without over-analyzing has always been a challenge to the classroom teacher. Prepared materials for "oral expression" usually fall short in terms of specific needs and often come equipped with questions or "assignments" appended, a formula which dooms many a well-meaning enterprise. **CO-OP CHORAL READING** uses the cooperative group as both audience and reader with a number of "variations on a theme."

This strategy may incorporate content material in the form of first-person accounts, speeches, fairy tales, myths, biographies, autobiographies, and most assuredly, poetry. Your students, after having gone through this process several times, can be actively involved in delineating the lines they will speak, while at the same time becoming aware of the power of the spoken word.

The literature you choose for the first few **CO-OP CHORAL READING** experiences should be simple and familiar, at least to you. A famous speech, a favorite poem, a short fable, are all good choices. You will need a ruler and a pencil and a copy of your selection. Draw lines to divide paragraphs or stanzas or, as with a poem, each of its lines may be separated.

With this "lining," you are then able to assign roles to your students when they have numbered themselves 1-4. On first reading, each student within each group who is number 1, reads line number 1. Student number 2 reads line number 2, and so on. The group becomes the audience for the individual reader. A variation on this asks all the students who are a specific number to read their lines in choral unison. The children may also be asked to stand around the room in their numbered groups. As opposed to numbering each line, each stanza may be numbered, or each paragraph in a speech.

This strategy allows you to use materials you have available in your curriculum so that your students can see connections between course content and words from history or words of reflection. Guide your students in discussions which establish relevancy and provide meaning. Allow for cooperative group interpretations of meaning. As you provide these experiences, you establish the groundwork for children to watch their learning develop as they learn to appreciate the spoken word and enjoy expressing themselves.

"THE BUN"

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

The beauty of this strategy is that you don't have to go searching for scripts in order to give students experiences in oral language. This variation on "The Gingerbread Man" is used as a way to illustrate the ease with which a simple story can be turned into a script for your cooperative groups.

Take a look at "The Bun" before lines were added. It is in exactly the format in which it would be found in a text. Copies may be made of folktales such as this one, fables and fairytales, favorite stories and poems, or famous speeches and the process is the same. Either draw the lines in and make copies for your students or have your students draw the lines themselves with your guidance. (An overhead projector works well.) The numbers in the margin correspond to the numbers that the members of the of the cooperative group give themselves.

The power of this strategy is the ease with which it can be used. You can provide many opportunities for your students within their cooperative groups to practice good oral expression and generally improve overall communication skills.

Summary:

At any time, when students are involved in cooperative group activities, it is important for you to circulate and pause often in order to monitor group interaction. Groups, as they gain skills, may occasionally wish to perform in front of the entire group and this should certainly be encouraged. You might set aside some time for your cooperative groups to visit other classrooms in the school to share their "readings."

THE BUN

A Folktale

There once was an old man and an old woman. One day the old man said, "Bake me a bun, old woman."

"What shall I bake it with? We have no flour," she answered.

"Come on, old woman! Sweep round the bin, shake out the tin. Maybe there's some flour in it."

So, the old woman took her duster, she swept round the bin, and she shook out the tin. She scraped together about two handfuls of flour. She mixed the dough with cream. She baked it in butter. And she put the bun on the window ledge to cool.

THAT WAS A BIG MISTAKE!

The bun got tired of lying on the window ledge so he rolled off!

He rolled from window to bench, from bench to floor, from floor to door, over the threshold and onto the porch. He rolled from the porch to the yard, from the yard through the gate, and off he rolled, right down the road!

He rolled along the road until he met a hare.

The hare said, "Round bun, round bun, I'm going to eat you for breakfast."

And the bun said, "I was scraped in the bin, shaken in the tin, baked on the grill, cooled on the sill, and I got away from the little old man and the little old woman. I shall not find it hard to get away from you, Mr. Hare."

And he rolled away so fast that the hare could never catch him.

On and on he rolled until he met a gray wolf.

The gray wolf said, "Round bun, round bun, I'm going to eat you for breakfast."

And the bun said, "I was scraped in the bin, shaken in the tin, baked on the grill, cooled on the sill, and I got away from the little old man and the little old woman, and Mr. Hare. I shall not find it hard to get away from you, Mr. Gray Wolf."

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And he rolled away so fast that the gray wolf could never catch him.

On and on he rolled until he met a bear.

The bear said, "Round bun, round bun, I'm going to eat you for breakfast."

"You most certainly won't," said the bun. "I was scraped in the bin, shaken in the tin, baked on the grill, cooled on the sill, and I got away from the little old man and the little old woman, I got away from Mr. Hare and Mr. Wolf. I shall not find it hard to get away from you, Mr. Bear."

And he rolled away so fast that the bear could never catch him.

On and on he rolled until he met a fox.

"Good day, little bun, how handsome you look today," said the fox.

And the bun sang his little song, "I was scraped in the bin, shaken in the tin, baked on the grill, cooled on the sill, and I got away from the little old man and the little old woman. I got away from Mr. Hare, Mr. Wolf, and Mr. Bear. I shall not find it hard to get away from you, Mr. Fox."

"Oh," said the fox, "what a wonderful little song. The only trouble is that I am rather old and I don't hear very well. Won't you come sit on my nose and sing your song again, louder this time?"

And the bun was so flattered that he hopped onto the fox's nose.

THAT WAS A BIG MISTAKE!

And the bun sang, "I was scraped in the bin, shaken in the tin, baked on the grill, cooled on the sill, and I got away from the little old man and the little old woman. I got away from Mr. Hare, Mr. Wolf, and Mr. Bear. I shall not find it hard to get away from you, Mr. Fox."

But the bun had not expected the fox to be so fast. By quickly throwing his head back and opening wide his jaws, that bun popped right into the fox's mouth and,

Snip-Snap-Snup,

The fox gobbled him up!

THE BUN

A Folktale

1 There once was an old man and an old woman. One day the old man said, "Bake me a bun, old woman."

2 "What shall I bake it with? We have no flour," she answered.

3 "Come on, old woman! Sweep round the bin, shake out the tin. Maybe there's some flour in it."

4 So, the old woman took her duster, she swept round the bin, and she shook out the tin. She scraped together about two handfuls of flour. She mixed the dough with cream. She baked it in butter. And she put the bun on the window ledge to cool.

ALL **THAT WAS A BIG MISTAKE!**

1 The bun got tired of lying on the window ledge so he rolled off!

2 He rolled from window to bench, from bench to floor, from floor to door, over the threshold and onto the porch. He rolled from the porch to the yard, from the yard through the gate, and off he rolled, right down the road!

3 He rolled along the road until he met a hare.

4 The hare said, "Round bun, round bun, I'm going to eat you for breakfast."

1 And the bun said, "I was scraped in the bin, shaken in the tin, baked on the grill, cooled on the sill, and I got away from the little old man and the little old woman. I shall not find it hard to get away from you, Mr. Hare."

2 And he rolled away so fast that the hare could never catch him.

3 On and on he rolled until he met a gray wolf.

4 The gray wolf said, "Round bun, round bun, I'm going to eat you for breakfast."

1 And the bun said, "I was scraped in the bin, shaken in the tin, baked on the grill, cooled on the sill, and I got away from the little old man and the little old woman, and Mr. Hare. I shall not find it hard to get away from you, Mr. Gray Wolf."

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2 And he rolled away so fast that the gray wolf could never catch him.

3 On and on he rolled until he met a bear.

4 The bear said, "Round bun, round bun, I'm going to eat you for breakfast."

1 "You most certainly won't," said the bun. "I was scraped in the bin, shaken in the tin, baked on the grill, cooled on the sill, and I got away from the little old man and the little old woman, I got away from Mr. Hare and Mr. Wolf. I shall not find it hard to get away from you, Mr. Bear."

2 And he rolled away so fast that the bear could never catch him.

3 On and on he rolled until he met a fox.

4 "Good day, little bun, how handsome you look today," said the fox.

1 And the bun sang his little song, "I was scraped in the bin, shaken in the tin, baked on the grill, cooled on the sill, and I got away from the little old man and the little old woman. I got away from Mr. Hare, Mr. Wolf, and Mr. Bear. I shall not find it hard to get away from you, Mr. Fox."

2 "Oh," said the fox, "what a wonderful little song. The only trouble is that I am rather old and I don't hear very well. Won't you come sit on my nose and sing your song again, louder this time?"

3 And the bun was so flattered that he hopped onto the fox's nose.

ALL **THAT WAS A BIG MISTAKE!**

1 And the bun sang, "I was scraped in the bin, shaken in the tin, baked on the grill, cooled on the sill, and I got away from the little old man and the little old woman. I got away from Mr. Hare, Mr. Wolf, and Mr. Bear. I shall not find it hard to get away from you, Mr. Fox."

2 But the bun had not expected the fox to be so fast. By quickly throwing his head back and opening wide his jaws, that bun popped right into the fox's mouth and,

Snip-Snap-Snup,

ALL The fox gobbled him up!

THE LITTLE RED HEN

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

Teachers of primary grade children spend a great deal of time looking for material which isn't too difficult to read and yet provides a worthwhile oral reading experience. This choral speaking strategy encourages eager participation and builds reading and listening skills. When this method is used, all children are actively involved because each group is its own audience as each child in the group reads a line at a time. By numbering off the lines and following the format outlined in the directions for **CO-OP CHORAL READING**, the sing-song interpretation so common to rhymed poetry can be avoided. In the Whole Language classroom, speaking, listening, reading, thinking, and writing work together to bring meaning. The poem, *"The Mouse, The Frog, and The Little Red Hen,"* is an example of an activity in which oral language is the vehicle for integrating literature-based experiences which also teach.

Begin by reading an original version of the story, *The Little Red Hen.* Cooperative groups may be invited to improvise a scene from the story. **CONSENSUS** may be a strategy you'd like to use to have the children agree on the moral of the story. Discuss the use of repetition, the different steps in the preparation of the bread, the responses of the animals. Then, introduce the poem by reading it aloud to the children. Pass copies to them, have them line it off (if they are old enough) and number the lines. Provide practice time within their groups.

After they have recited the poem several times, all of the "1's" should stand together, all of the "2's," etc. and the poem can be read in choral unison.

Summary:

To introduce variety into the reading of the poem, questions such as these will also bring awareness and help to improve oral reading skills:

How should that character sound when he is talking?

How can we show feeling in our voices?

How did the Little Red Hen sound at the end?

Further activities may include cooperative group work which details the similarities and differences between the poem and the story, the writing of a poem to go with another familiar tale, a group-created mural to illustrate the poem, and further discussion of the theme.

THE MOUSE, THE FROG, AND THE LITTLE RED HEN

—Anonymous

Once a Mouse, a Frog, and a Little Red Hen
Together kept a house;
The Frog was the laziest of frogs,
And lazier still was the Mouse.

The work all fell on the Little Red Hen,
Who had to get the wood,
And build the fires, and scrub, and cook,
And sometimes hunt the food.

One day, as she went scratching round,
She found a bag of rye;
Said she, "Now, who will make some bread?"
Said the lazy Mouse, "Not I."

"Nor I," croaked the Frog, as he drowsed in the shade.
Red Hen made no reply,
But flew around with bowl and spoon,
And mixed and stirred the rye.

"Who'll make the fire to bake the bread?"
Said the Mouse again, "Not I,"
And, scarcely op'ning his sleepy eyes,
Frog made the same reply.

The Little Red Hen said never a word,
But a roaring fire she made;
And while the bread was baking brown,
"Who'll set the table?" she said.

"Not I," said the sleepy Frog with a yawn;
"Nor I," said the Mouse again.
So the table she set, and the bread put on,
"Who'll eat this bread?" said the Hen.

"I will!" cried the Frog. "And I!" squeaked the Mouse,
As they near the table drew:
"On, no, you won't!" said the Little Red Hen,
And away with the loaf she flew.

CO-OP AESOP

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

While the following shortened versions of Aesop's Fables are the result of a quick rewrite for choral reading by groups of four, it is to be remembered that it isn't necessary to do any more than add lines and numbers to available material to turn it into a choral reading script. Reproduce the mini-scripts and distribute them to your cooperative groups for short cooperative choral reading practice and then follow-up with one of the ideas suggested.

THE GREAT AND LITTLE FISHES

Reader 1:	"We are the terrors of the ocean," said the big fishes.
Reader 2:	"Everything is afraid of us, and we are afraid of nothing."
Reader 3:	"Little fishes do not count, they cannot fight."
Reader 4:	At that moment, a fisherman lowered his new strong net.
Reader 1:	The big fishes were quickly caught
Reader 2:	And thrown into the ship.
Reader 3:	The little fishes escaped through the wide mesh.
Reader 4:	Sometimes it is safer to be small.

THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE ANT

Reader 1:	One winter's day an ant struggled to put some grains of food out into the sun to dry.
Reader 2:	A hungry grasshopper asked the ant for some of it.
Reader 3:	"Why are you asking me for food?"
Reader 4:	"What were you doing all summer long?" said the ant.
Reader 1:	"I spent the summer singing," said the grasshopper.
Reader 2:	"I spent the summer putting food away for the winter," said the ant.
Reader 3:	"Singing is much more fun than working," said the grasshopper.
Reader 4:	"Well," said the ant, "you sang all summer, now you can dance all winter."
All:	You can't play all of the time.

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THE FOX AND THE CROW

Reader 1: A crow had stolen a piece of cheese and flown with it into a tall tree.

Reader 2: A fox was watching the crow.

Reader 3: "If I am smart," said the fox, "I will have that cheese for myself."

Reader 4: He thought for awhile and decided on a plan.

Reader 1: "Hello, Miss Crow," he said.

Reader 2: "You look so beautiful today.

Reader 3: "I have never seen such shiny feathers."

Reader 4: "Your neck is as graceful as a swan's."

Reader 1: "Your wings are mightier than an eagle's."

Reader 2: If you could only sing, I'm sure your voice would be as sweet as a nightingale's."

Reader 3: What do you think that crow did?

Reader 4: She opened her mouth to sing!

Reader 1: The cheese landed on the ground.

Reader 2: And, the fox snapped it up!

Reader 3: He called back to the crow,

Reader 4: "I talked about your beauty, but I said nothing about your brains."

All: Don't be fooled by flattery.

BELLING THE CAT

Reader 1: The mice were always being bothered by the cat.

Reader 2: They decided to meet and come up with a plan.

Reader 3: At the meeting, one of the mice had an idea.

Reader 4: "If we put a bell around the cat's neck,

Reader 1: we could always hear the cat."

Reader 2: "That would warn us."

Reader 3: "And we'd have plenty of time to get to our homes."

Reader 4: All the mice clapped and clapped for the clever plan.

Reader 1: Except one mouse

Reader 2: Who had a question to ask.

Reader 3: "It's a fine plan," he said,

Reader 4: but, who's going to put the bell on the cat?"

All: Sometimes it's easier to think up a plan than to carry it out

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THE FOX AND THE GRAPES

Reader 1: The fox hadn't had any breakfast.

Reader 2: And he hadn't had any lunch.

Reader 3: When he found himself in a vineyard,

Reader 4: his mouth began to water.

Reader 1: One juicy-looking bunch of grapes was hanging on a trellis.

Reader 2: Up leaped the fox.

Reader 3: It was just beyond his reach.

Reader 4: He went back a few steps and got a running start.

Reader 1: He jumped again.

Reader 2: He missed.

Reader 3: He tried again and once more he failed.

Reader 4: The prize was out of his reach.

Reader 1: He was tired and worn out.

Reader 2: He turned to leave the vineyard.

Reader 3: "I really wasn't very hungry anyway," he told himself.

Reader 4: "Besides, those grapes are probably sour."

All: There is sometimes comfort in pretending that what we can't get isn't worth having.

Summary:

The advantage of **CO-OP CHORAL READING** is its easily used format for direct involvement. Be sure to discuss the meaning of the word "moral" with your students. Suggest they use the library to locate other fables besides those by Aesop. Supply a list of idio- matic expressions and have cooperative groups work backwards, creating a story which fictionally explains how the idiom originated, thus, they'll be developing their own fables. They may enjoy performing those for one another. Pairing cooperative groups for this purpose is an easy way to create an audience for mini-performances.

PERSPECTIVE

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Books not only tell wonderful stories, they open the door for some innovative cross-curricular teaching opportunities. Teachers today frequently use sets of novels in their classrooms to bring a historical period to life. The reading and discussion centered around *Save Queen of Sheba* (Louise Moeri, Avon Books), for instance, brings the Westward Movement alive far more than two paragraphs in a history book could. The history is still necessary, but the fiction brings a deeper appreciation and understanding of the time. In much the same way, the appreciation of literature can be greatly enhanced when there is a more thorough understanding of what has gone before. From primary picture books to the classics we all love, the depth of our enjoyment is often influenced by what we know about the subject or the setting.

PERSPECTIVE offers a strategy which looks at this issue of "understanding" and provides a means to enhance it. Perhaps one of its most effective uses is with historical fiction - from picture books to more sophisticated texts, but it is one of those strategies whose unique uses will emerge once the idea has been applied and practiced. This approach will work at all grade levels and because it teaches children how to observe both nuances and authors' devices, it is of inestimable value as children learn to take control of their intellectual growth.

This strategy requires thinking and practice. You will need to provide guided practice sessions for the entire class in the beginning, and then cooperative group practice sessions as skills are developed. The story, *Save Queen of Sheba,* and any other books used for this activity, should certainly be read for pleasure before being used for this purpose. The purpose of this strategy is to use the fictional aspect of the book in another way. Care must be taken not to dissect it to death, but use cooperative group work to add interest by looking at the book from another perspective. What can we learn about history from its events, settings, or characters? What information could you get from this book if you were a scientist, a psychologist, or another author trying to get some ideas?

The perspective taken depends on the literature used. If a book such as *Save Queen of Sheba,* was read, a group would be assigned to report on it from a historical perspective, or perhaps a geographical perspective. In doing so, the focus would be less on the fictional aspects and more on history and/or geography. What historical facts were important to the story? What did the author need to know in order to write this book? How did the landscape affect the wagon train and its survivors? Additional

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perspectives which might be explored include: scientist (biologist, botanist, zoologist, oceanographer), historian, geographer (how the landforms and water affected people living at that time), anthropologist (what can be learned about the culture), psychologist (how and why people behaved as they did), or book reviewer (instances of good writing, effective use of imagery and description, interest).

Once your students have had some experience investigating a perspective as a class, then as a group, another variation might be pursued. Each child in the group might choose or be assigned a different perspective and be given adequate time to read a chapter, a series of chapters, or the entire book if it is a picture book. After each one has finished reading enough to discuss or write about their perspective, each of the students in the class investigating the same perspective would leave their cooperative group and meet in a "job-alike" group, all the book reviewers would meet, all the anthropologists would meet, etc., and they would spend time together sharing their observations.

After a given time period, the "job-alike" individuals would return to their cooperative groups to enlighten group members. The depth of understanding which comes from the contributions of all of these perspectives would lead to some form of book report, either a group or individual product.

Miss Rumphius, by Barbara Cooney, winner of the American Book Award, is an excellent example of a primary book which might be used. For primary children, discussion in groups after hearing the story read would take the place of any major written assignment. *Old Henry*, by Joan W. Blos, is an interesting one which might be used with both older and younger children. *When I Was Young in the Mountains*, by Cynthia Rylant, also offers a perspective easily understood by those of us who sometimes begin sentences with, "When I was young..."

The wonderful possibilities for variations within this strategy will have you pulling out old favorites to use in new ways.

PERSPECTIVE promotes interest, accountability and interdependence as information is organized into a network of related facts. Reading and writing about reading makes more sense when it is done in a natural context. The interpretation and assimilation of new ideas weaves together a background for future learnings. Questions which you might pose include:

What were you thinking about when you were reading?

How was reading it for a specific reason different from just reading it?

What information did you hear from other perspectives which was particularly interesting?

What facts helped you reach your conclusions?

WHITE RABBIT

Subject Area: History

Directions:

The excerpt below is from an interview published in the *California Historical Society Quarterly* of December, 1944. In it, Lucy Young, a native Californian and Wailaki Indian, recounts to her interviewer, Edith Murphey, reminiscences of her grandfather...

WHITE RABBIT

My grandpa - before white people came - dream. He so old he all double-up. Knees to chin. Eyes like indigo blue. Grown son carry him in great basket on back.

My grandpa say, "White Rabbit," he mean white people, "gonna devour our grass, our seed, our living. We have nothing more this world. Big elk with straight horn come when White Rabbit bring it." I think he meant cattle. "Another animal, bigger than deer, but round feet, got hair on neck." This one horse, I guess. My aunt say, "Father, you out your head. Don't say that way."

Grandpa say, "Daughter, I not crazy. Young people gonna see this."

People come long way, listen to him dream. Grandpa dream then say this way every morning. They leave little children play by him. He watch good. Grandpa have big stick, wave around. Scare snake away. Grandpa have good teeth. All old people have good teeth.

One time they travel. Come to big pile of brush. Grandpa stop, look, say, "This good wood. When I die, burn my body to ashes on top of ground. Here gonna be big canoe. It run around, carry White Rabbit things. Those White Rabbit got lots of everything."

How canoe gonna run around on dry ground? we ask. "Don't know," he say, "Just run that way." Grandpa mean wagons, I guess.

Grandpa never live to see White Rabbit. Just dream about them every night.

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Grandpa go down by big spring. One day he couldn't get up. He say, "I gonna leave you today. I used to be good hunter. Kill bear, elk, deer. Feed my children. Can't feed my children more. Like old root, I'm ready just to grow now." Pretty soon Grandpa dead. Speak no more.

All seem like a dream to me now from long, long ago.

Night time he died. In morning all tied-up in deerskin with grass rope. Grandpa sit up, knees to chin. But they tie him up too soon. He not dead. Roll over, come back. Scare everyone. Grandpa ask for packstrap to basket always carry him in. He ask for little basket he use for cup. Drink lots of water. "I starve for water, want my strap," he say. "That's why I come back."

This excerpt from a long-ago historical interview is used here to illustrate the strategy explained in **PERSPECTIVE**. Information can be interpreted in a variety of ways. To interpret the written word from a perspective other than that of a passive observer adds both interest and insight.

Assign each group member a different point of view in order to analyze this story. The "Anthropologist" would investigate all aspects of the culture which could be gleaned from reading the selection (treatment of elders, how bodies are dealt with at death, the use of a basket for a cup, etc.); the "Psychologist" would explain why the characters behaved as they did and perhaps interpret Grandpa's dreams; the "Scientist" would examine animals and plants and how they affected daily life, and the "Book Reviewer" might comment on Lucy's language patterns and how they influenced the feeling of the memoir.

Summary:

Group discussion may be ongoing during this activity. Talking about thoughts creates new ones. Allow time for the sharing of group interpretations. The continuing task of creating lifelong learners out of our students requires that we put them in situations which are challenging and unusual. **PERSPECTIVE** doesn't fit everywhere, but it is a unique vehicle for creating curiosity and inviting further research when used in both non-fiction and fiction selections. Questions which may be asked include:

How did it feel to examine this story from a different perspective?

Is there anything you'd like to know more about? Where could you find that information?

What surprised you, if anything?

SAVE QUEEN OF SHEBA

Subject Area: Social Studies

Directions:

The two children who survive the Indian raid, King David and Queen of Sheba, have special stories which explain their names. It is, however, the adventures of King David, a twelve-year old boy, trying to survive in the wilderness with his six year old sister, which holds one's interest. Louise Moeri's book, *Save Queen of Sheba* (New York, Avon Books, 1982), is a great read-aloud for intermediate students, especially those studying the Westward Movement.

With literature being integrated into social studies, this is an ideal selection for children to read. Its availability in paperback allows for reading groups, and entire classes, to have the pleasure of reading fine fiction which teaches history. Many school libraries order class sets of paperbacks for this purpose. This book is one example of many which can also be used practice **PERSPECTIVE.**

Reading for the purpose of information gathering can be structured within cooperative groups so that children read independently and then look, as a group, more closely at what they are reading. Each group, or each group member, might be assigned a different perspective.

An obvious perspective, once you've become familiar with the book, would be that of a psychologist. Why did the characters behave as they did? King David's behavior was based on survival, but his sister's reactions were entirely different. Each chapter provides clues which could be examined by the cooperative group.

Reviewing the story from a geographic perspective would be another potential area of interest. How did the land and the availability of water affect the story. How did the book's characters use the land? Why were they going to Oregon in the first place?

The author's use of sensory images adds reality to this story. You can feel, taste, see, hear and smell much of what transpires. A group paying particular attention to this perspective would learn a great deal about creating a believable story.

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The purpose of **PERSPECTIVE** is to enrich the reading of the story, not to create a tedious exercise. That is why a group assignment, following the reading, would be most advantageous. If each group is given a different perspective, the reporting could be done in a format agreed upon by the group.

Summary:

Learning about history by learning about the lives of people who lived in different times has made the school day a great deal more interesting for many children. Textbooks can easily be supplemented by stories such as this one. Ask:

How did reading from a different perspective affect your interest?

What information did you come across when you looked at your books with a different perspective?

TWO FROM LIONNI

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

For children to be able to effectively learn to compare and contrast two of anything takes a great deal of practice. If your students have had no experience in comparing and contrasting, I would suggest intensive practice prior to the cooperative activity described. In addition, if they have never studied the parts of a story (setting, characters, problem, or resolution), this activity is not the place to teach it. This activity is designed to illustrate how **PERSPECTIVE** can be used with younger children to enrich and reinforce their reading and listening skills.

Comparing and contrasting takes a certain degree of sophistication, but this type of lesson can be done as successfully in the primary grades as in the intermediate grades. Using two picture books by Leo Lionni, the objective is to assign each child in the cooperative group the task of assessing them from different perspectives. For primary children, oral reporting, dictation to a classroom aide, or illustrating answers may be preferable to writing. This strategy may certainly be used with a single book, but this variation provides interest.

The two books used for this lesson are *Frederick* and *Swimmy*. Both are by Leo Lionni. Each of the books should be read to your class in a whole-group setting prior to the cooperative group activity. The perspectives to be explored in this activity are going to be quite different from those which would be used in a historical fiction novel or story, but interestingly, this same activity (with different books) can be very successful with older children. Ask each child in the cooperative group to report on one of the following:

Setting: Each of the two books has a different setting. The child reporting on this aspect of the stories should be able to describe each one and tell its importance to the story.

Characters: The main characters in each of the books should be described. They should be compared and contrasted. Character traits should be closely examined. (*What did you like about Swimmy? What did you like about Frederick?*)

Problem: In each story, a problem must be solved. The child reporting on this should be able to identify the problems or conflicts and tell about them.

Resolution: The problems are solved in different ways. (*What were they? How were the solutions similar? How were they different?*)

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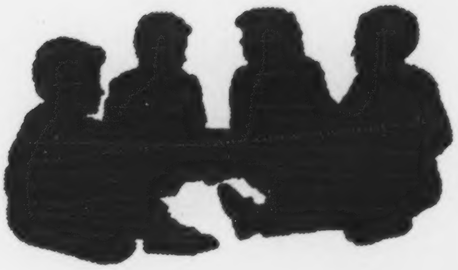
Summary:

Set aside enough time for discussion to take place within each group so that children can clarify their thoughts with one another. This may be necessary for them to feel secure with this type of assignment. Expanding upon this format, and for use with older children, investigation of the thematic focus might also be considered. A further variation would be to assign each of the areas of interest to a different cooperative group and take several days to complete this project. Lionni's art work is imaginative and integral to the impact of the books. Your students may enjoy creating similar art work around their favorite Lionni character.



MERRY-GO-ROUND

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Sometimes it is important to have an activity which allows students to get out of their seats and have an opportunity to move around while they work. It's usually difficult to structure moving-around activities and learning opportunities so that they occur simultaneously. **MERRY-GO-ROUND** is a strategy which sets the stage for a learning experience with a difference.

For this activity, you will need some poster board or large sheets of paper which can be taped or tacked to the wall or to cupboards in different places around your classroom. Circulating from poster to poster to preview the tasks, questions, or directions, students may take notes on the posters' contents before returning to their groups.

At their seats, cooperative teams discuss, reach consensus, and then return to each poster to complete the task required. With one student from each cooperative group designated as recorder, responses are written directly on the poster.

In every subject area where a thoughtful response to a question is required, where opinions are asked for, when creative fluency is desired, when comments and critiques are invited, **MERRY-GO-ROUND** serves as a unique vehicle for learning.

This activity makes it clear to your students that their comments are interesting and valued. Students learn that their ideas are acceptable, that they can synthesize ideas and create new ones. This strategy is a *process* activity, it is not intended to elicit a finished product. It is intended to set the groundwork for discussion and for learning something together as a group. The next step might be comparison and contrast papers, oral reports, reaction papers, or further research.

SIMILES

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

When most students attempt to write similes, the results are fairly pedestrian. This cooperative strategy should create more interesting similes and a memorable learning experience. Tack ten large pieces of poster board or newsprint in various places around your classroom. At the top of each piece of poster board, write a word which refers to something concrete. This means that the word(s) written should refer to something that can be perceived by one or more of the five senses. You may want to generate those words during a group discussion. Possible examples might include: Cauliflower, Mailbox, Beach, Breakfast, Pizza, Couch, Bookshelves, Kitten, Rain and Penguin.

Direct your students to circulate as a group, look at each word and think about descriptive words and phrases which refer to it. They should decide in their cooperative group on words which they'd like to write on the poster board. (For instance, a group could decide on "stinks to high heaven" for cauliflower, or "gooey" for pizza). All groups should contribute one word or phrase to each poster.

Now, you will need to write ten abstract words on the chalkboard. Possible examples might include: Happiness, Patriotism, Education, Beauty, Friendship, Hope, Hate, Life, Homework, Justice and Loneliness. The task now is for each group to write a simile combining one concrete word from the poster with any of the abstract words on the board. Group members return to the posters to decide which descriptive phrases they should use in this "marriage" and then create a cumulative sentence using an abstract word, a concrete word, and a descriptive phrase in this format:

(abstract word) is like (concrete word), (descriptive word or phrases describing how, using words from poster).

It should go like somewhat like this:

Homework is like cauliflower, it stinks to high heaven.

Summary:

This activity may require some in-depth collaboration as the pairing of words may not seem to go together at first. Your groups will really need to work at it to make them similes, but the effort will create some outstanding results. Follow this activity with group or individual stories which include the use of the created similes.

PROVERBS

Subject Areas: Language Arts, History, Sociology, Geography

Directions:

People everywhere in the world use proverbs. The lesson suggestions which follow incorporate an introduction to proverbs, several cross-curricular ideas, and a myriad of activities to build awareness of this form of folklore.

Use the information on proverbs to set the stage for **MERRY-GO-ROUND** and for subsequent lessons. This may be considered background material for you or your students, it may be duplicated or copied onto a chalkboard.

PROVERBS

If you have ever had someone say to you, "Don't cry over spilled milk," or comment, "Easy come, easy go," then you have received advice in the form of a proverb. Proverbs are simply short bits of wisdom that people all over the world have used for thousands of years. Proverbs offer advice and explain how we ought to feel about things that happen to us. They don't lecture or preach long sermons, they sum up in a few well-chosen words what experience has taught. People of different cultures, living thousands of miles apart, often have very similar proverbs, because each proverb is about a problem that occurs frequently in the lives of all human beings. Proverbs are a form of folklore that is essentially universal.

For this activity, you will need poster board or large sheets of paper which can be taped or tacked around your classroom. To introduce proverbs to your cooperative groups, choose eight or ten of your favorites (from the list to follow) and write one proverb at the top of each of the sheets of paper. Following the format described in **MERRY-GO-ROUND**, your students will circulate in their cooperative groups to each of the posters. They will read each proverb, return to their seats to discuss its meaning, reach consensus and write down their interpretation. This will continue until each group has interpreted each proverb. The group's recorder is to return to the sheet of paper and record the group's opinion directly on the paper. The recorder may change each time.

Select students to read the different interpretations written on the large sheets of papers. During the debriefing, allow time for discussion of the meanings of the proverbs.

Summary:

To stimulate further discussion, ask:

Did you agree with the proverb? Why?

What did you think about when you heard it?

PROVERBS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

He who rides the tiger finds it difficult to dismount.

He who stands with his feet on two ships will be drowned.

Eat to live, not live to eat.

Six feet of earth makes all men equal.

If you want to go fast, go the old road.

Little by little grow the bananas.

Two captains sink the ship.

Chickens always come home to roost.

Ice three feet thick isn't frozen in a day.

Young gambler - old beggar.

Where the river is deepest it makes the least noise.

If you climb up a tree, you must climb down that same tree.

Eggs must not quarrel with stones.

A horse that arrives early gets good drinking water.

By trying often, the monkey learns to jump from the tree.

Many a good man is found under a shabby hat.

People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

It is better to say a hen ran here than that a rooster died here.

The man who is carried on another man's back does not appreciate how far off the town is.

Faults are like a hill; you stand on your own and talk about those of other people.

A stitch in time saves nine.

A stone in the water doesn't comprehend how parched the hill is.

You can force a man to shut his eyes, but you can't make him sleep.

God gives the milk but not the pail.

PROVERBS, AGAIN

Subject Area: Language Arts, History, Sociology, Geography

Directions:

Following the introductory activity on proverbs, here are some additional ideas for subsequent lessons:

- Have cooperative groups collaborate on a creative group story which invents the origin of the proverb. Post the "origin" stories on the posters.
- Locate other forms of folklore and discuss common universal humanistic aspects of literature from around the world.
- Allow cooperative groups to visit the library and locate dictionaries of proverbs from other countries. Group members can mark the geographical areas on a world map with a tack and create a bulletin board surrounded by proverbs with a global perspective.
- Identify proverbs from different countries which are similar, but reflect cultural variations.
- Groups may conduct surveys or interviews asking interviewees for examples of proverbs which have been significant in their lives.
- Cooperative groups may role-play or create a skit which has the proverb as its moral or punch line.
- Students may design a banner on which they illustrate their favorite proverb.
- Groups may select two proverbs which seem to give opposing messages and debate their value and/or validity.
- Write a group story which uses as many proverbs as possible.
- Match proverbs with familiar stories. (This would be another possible **MERRY-GO-ROUND** activity). Justify the rationale. (An example of this might be comparing the proverb, Palm nuts do not ripen while you stand under a tree, to the efforts of the Little Red Hen.)
- Use synectics, or forced association, to encourage creative group endeavors (e.g. How is "A bird in the hand is worth a hundred flying" similar to "A rolling stone gathers no moss?").
- Categorize proverbs which rhyme ("Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise"), which use irony ("Physician, heal thyself), and those which offer comparison or contrast ("Feed a cold and starve a fever").

IF YOU COULD ASK A QUESTION...

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

The literature approach to reading involves primary children in activities which enhance their interest in literary works and connects them personally to the stories they hear. **MERRY-GO-ROUND** is one way to help young children reflect on literature and take them beyond the work itself.

While it may be a glaring generalization, most primary teachers spend a great deal of time reading wonderful storybooks to their students. Choose four to six of your students' favorites and write their titles at the top of large sheets of newsprint or poster board and place them around the room.

Conduct a group discussion to recall the main characters, the setting, and the plot of each of the stories. You may even wish to assign that task to your cooperative groups and have each group report on one of the books to the entire class. The purpose is to set the stage for the cooperative activity. After recalling the story plots and identifying the major characters, ask the students:

> *If you could ask one question of each of the main characters in these stories, what would it be*

Invite the students in their groups to circulate together to each of the posters and discuss what they'd like to ask the main character. This will require consensus. One group member is to be assigned the job of writing the question on the poster. This aspect of the activity may require upper-grade "buddies" or parent helpers to whom the question may be dictated.

To illustrate this, consider one of the many versions of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* as an example. Use this example with the children as well. Say:

> *A question I'd like to ask Goldilocks is: Why did you go into that house in the first place?*

Other books and related questions might include:

1. *It's George* by Miriam Cohen - *How did it feel to save someone's life?*

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2. *Max* by Rachel Isadora - *How did you like ballet lessons?*
3. *Oh, Brother!* by Patrica Lakin - *How do you feel about your little brother now?*
4. *Frederick* by Leo Lionni - *What are you going to do next year?*

Summary:

Obviously, this list can go on and on. The dialogue you will create between children and their favorite storybook characters will pay great dividends. Encouraging children to think beyond the contents of a book helps it to come alive. You may want to follow this **MERRY-GO-ROUND** activity by having each group take the responsibility for answering the questions on one of the posters. Also, you may wish to ask:

How did it feel to be "talking" to book characters?

Can you think of other questions you'd like to ask?

Which other books would be fun to ***MERRY-GO-ROUND*** *like this?*

What good ideas did you hear in your discussions?

CO-OP CLUSTERING

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Clustering was originally developed as a writing warm-up exercise to generate a network of thoughts from a nucleus word. It is a type of brainstorming which accesses the right brain's image-making and synthesis capabilities so that words are generated which eventually evolve into a kind of pattern of ideas. Each response generates further responses, all related to the whole. **CO-OP CLUSTERING** produces a unique group product which can form the basis for writing across the curriculum, for studying for tests, for outlining, and, in essence, for organizing and sequencing one's thoughts.

When done on a group basis, more experiences are tapped into, motivation is increased, the language bank is often added to, new thinking is initiated, and imagination is stimulated. **CO-OP CLUSTERING** convinces students that they do have something to say.

Demonstrate the process by writing a word on the board and drawing a circle around it. Words that describe emotions are excellent ways to begin teaching clustering. Ask your students, "What did you think of when you saw that word?" Create a cluster by drawing lines radiating outward from that word and recording the students' responses and circling them.

You may choose to proceed with a writing lesson which would be an outgrowth of this cluster. Ask the students to generate sentences based on the words in the cluster. Encourage them to put those sentences in a paragraph format and come up with a title.

To move into **CO-OP CLUSTERING**, use a topic word specific to a particular unit of study, a word that will stimulate a great deal of thought because it relates to something which your students know about. Each group has one sheet of paper and chooses a recorder. Tell the group the focus word and have them create a group cluster by generating as many responses as they can within a two to three minute time period.

At this point, the activity becomes an individual enterprise. The cluster has become a prompt. Invite your students to write an imaginative or informative paragraph independently using the ideas in the cluster. Allow about ten to fifteen minutes for this. Stop at the specified time and provide an opportunity for them to give titles to their paragraphs and to share them within their groups.

The individual products which evolve from the cooperative cluster will vary considerably and your students will be amazed at the widely differing responses. If time allows, ask for your students to "volunteer" someone else's paper which they particularly enjoyed so that the entire class can hear some of them.

SOMETHING TO MAKE THE WORLD MORE BEAUTIFUL

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

The lovely story of *Miss Rumphius* by Barbara Cooney (New York, Viking Penguin Inc., 1982), mentioned elsewhere in these pages, provides the focal point for a lesson in **CO-OP CLUSTERING** which can cross all grade levels because of its universal nature. The story begins in Victorian times and its wonderful illustrations capture the message of its words. Alice Rumphius adventurously traveled the world for many years and returned to live by the sea. She had done much of what she had intended to do in her life, but she had one more thing to do - when she had been a little girl, she had promised her grandfather she would do something to make the world more beautiful.

Read the story to your entire group and allow them to discover together what it was Miss Rumphius decided to do. Then, on the chalkboard write the title of this activity: "Something to Make the World More Beautiful." Draw a circle around it and provide a single large sheet of paper and a crayon or marker for each of your cooperative groups. Have the phrase copied onto each group's paper, and a line drawn around it.

The brainstorming which follows takes shape as children in their groups generate ideas for something they would do which would make the world more beautiful. As each new idea is presented, it is connected by a line to the phrase in the circle. A line is drawn around each new idea. Allow only two to three minutes for this.

What is to follow can be continued as a cooperative activity or it can become an individual endeavor. In either case, the clustering has sparked imagination and provided the rationale for the next step.

The next step can be an individual or a group-generated story. The title would obviously be the phrase in the circle. The use of **FOUR SENTENCE SUMMARY** or **PYRAMID** would also be appropriate.

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Summary:

The structure of the finished product will depend upon the age and ability of your groups, but the motivation incurred from the experience of hearing the story and then generating ideas will be impressive. Questions you might ask include:

How was your thinking changed when you listened to other ideas?

Did you use someone else's ideas to write your story?

What ideas are really possible?

In what way are you like Miss Rumphius?

A bulletin board display might be titled with the phrase, "Something to Make the World More Beautiful," and illustrations could be posted along with the children's stories. Try this with other wonderful children's literature and other themes.

TEDDY BEAR

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

The topic for this cooperative clustering activity could be easily integrated into a language arts or social studies time block in the classroom. Almost everybody can talk about teddy bears. Because they can, it provides an ideal focus for a cluster, and particularly a cluster which deals with feelings.

The words "teddy bear," written on the chalkboard with a circle drawn around them, will stimulate thoughts, memories, and remembered feelings in most elementary school children. Each group has one sheet of paper and chooses a recorder. The recorder writes the words "teddy bear" in the center of a blank sheet of paper and to draw a circle around the words. Since the purpose of this particular clustering activity is to elicit some talk about feelings, direct the children toward that by saying:

Our cluster topic for today is "teddy bear." Most of us have had teddy bears, some of us even still have teddy bears. You may have a teddy bear on your bed at this very moment. Some of you may even sleep with your teddy bear. Teddy bears give us special feelings because they bring back memories of when we were very little, and they sometimes have special stories that go with them. Think for a moment or two about the feelings you have about your teddy bear, or about any stuffed animal that is special to you.

Tell the children to think about words and phrases that come into their minds about their bears and tell them to their group's recorder.

Each cooperative group now engages in a brainstorming-type session within each cooperative group. As group members make suggestions for additions to the cluster, the recorder draws lines connecting the suggestions to the cluster prompt (see the diagram on the next page). Allow the groups to generate as many responses as possible within a limited time period.

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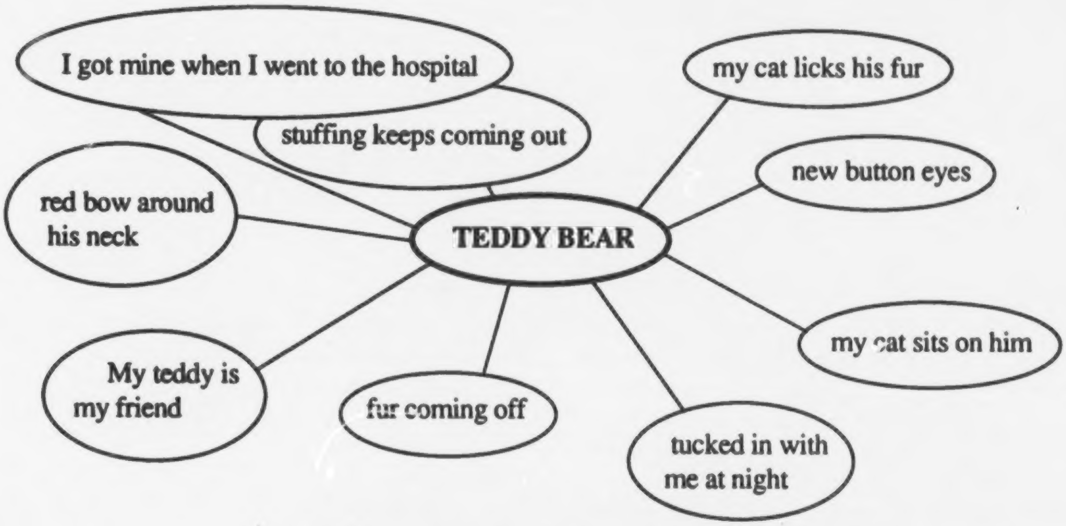

After everyone in each group has had adequate time to contribute to the cluster, the next step is to have the children use the group product to create an individual one. Many times when we ask children to write, we forget that they often think they have nothing to write about. Because of the emotional response which this specific cluster evokes, this strategy orchestrates a way for children to write about their thoughts and feelings, a form of expression which may be denied (for a variety of reasons) in many traditional classrooms. Having feelings is a given, but often, children are reluctant to write or talk about them.

After listening to the varied contributions within one's group, a child has the option of using any and all ideas and doesn't have to depend solely on his/her own thoughts. The cluster has become the prompt; its ideas form the basis for further writing activities.

Summary:

The variety of responses which will be engendered by this activity will be considerable. Within their groups, children share their products with one another, if they wish. After sharing, ask:

Who would like to share their story (or poem, etc.) with the class?

And many times, children do want their story to be heard, but are reluctant to volunteer, so you might ask:

Would anyone like to volunteer someone else's story to be shared?

Other debriefing questions could include:

What was it about this activity that you enjoyed the most?

What feelings were common to most of us who shared?

BEST FRIENDS

Subject Area: Guidance, Language Arts

Directions:

Having friends and being a valued friend is very important to children. Many books have been written on the topic of friendship because friends are one of the ways children relate to their world. Friends provide acceptance and trust. Children often define their own worth in terms of their friendships. Certainly, they have problems with friends, and every child has an ideal "best friend" who sometimes disappoints them.

CO-OP CLUSTERING is a form of brainstorming which uses a topic word to stimulate thinking. This lesson also incorporates the use of the book, *We Are Best Friends*, by Aliki (New York, William Morrow & Company, Inc., 1982), which may be used to set the stage and stimulate thinking in primary grade children for the cooperative learning activity which follows.

While the book focuses on a friend who has moved away, the loneliness which follows, and the making of a new friend, it is the understanding that one can make a new friend which is the key to what unfolds.

Read the story to your group and then put the words "best friend" on the chalkboard or on a large sheet of butcher paper and draw a circle around it. Ask:

What kind of things do you think of when you hear or see "best friend?"

As the children respond, write each of their responses around the words "best friend," circling each word or phrase and attaching it with a line drawn to the topic word. Elicit as many responses as possible, and ask questions to encourage elaboration. This period should last only two or three minutes.

The next step should include some form of cognitive closure. **CO-OP CLUSTERING** provides the basic ideas for individual stories, a group story, or group-created poems about "best friends."

Summary:

You may wish to guide your students through a **FOUR SENTENCE SUMMARY** which could capsulize all their thoughts. The group would then have a story which resulted from their clustering. Choosing one idea which evolved from the clustering and illustrating it would be another option. Use of the strategy, **MAILBOX**, would allow for both individual expression and further verbalization of feelings.

CONSENSUS

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

One of the most formidable tasks for a group of children is to come to agreement. Yet, reaching consensus is widely acknowledged to be one of the most important social skills for managing conflict and working productively in groups. Compromise is often integral to reaching consensus, but it is difficult to practice. Being able to listen to someone else's ideas long enough to consider their merit is not a trait common to most children. **CONSENSUS** offers opportunities for children to practice listening, to share ideas, to consider, and to reach agreement.

All the activities related to **CONSENSUS** call for some form of discussion. A lecture-format presentation followed by a group discussion might precede the cooperative small group discussion. The large group discussion can be used to introduce new concepts, clarify information, or present material. Within the small group, participants can express their own views and hear the views of others.

To prepare younger children to learn to reach consensus, and depending upon the makeup of your particular group, you may wish to begin by having members of the groups share ideas and information and their individual opinions. Experiences of this type enable children to express themselves without feeling that they are giving anything up. That approach and actually reaching group consensus are both valid for enhancing interpersonal skills.

To be successful in reaching consensus, students in cooperative groups need to be aware of the rationale, and the underlying structure of the concept being taught, and grasp the significance of the goal they are trying to reach. **Value needs to be seen in constructing something new from all of their ideas, something which is a unique product of many minds.**

An outstanding training model to use are fables. Those of Aesop are excellent, but there are also fables and folktales from around the world which offer lessons or moral teachings. After reading several fables and discussing the lessons given by the authors, read a fable without giving the moral. Invite the children to discuss what they believe its lesson is. Tell them that they must agree, and provide large posters for them to write their moral and accompanying illustration. Allow at least twenty minutes for this part of the lesson. As each group shares its moral and the different posters are displayed around the room, the children begin to take ownership of their group's creation and the seeds are sown for future growth in the area of consensus building. Similar activities would include: reading a story and having the group predict the ending or a group-created product (research project, cookbook, book report, oral presentation) which required consensus to organize.

Your students will begin to see how each other's ideas can help them. Becoming aware of relationships in learning and acquiring knowledge as a result of working together in a group are direct benefits of this strategy. Practice is essential, but the many forms that practice can take, as illustrated on the following pages, are exciting and involving.

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OBSERVATIONS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Subject Area: Science

Directions:

A successful method for teaching students the skills of careful observation can be structured so that it is also an interactive group activity which has amusing results. It can be repeated with a variety of props and can cross curricular areas with ease. Essentially, it is a "take-off" on the pet rock idea, but the objects can be animate as well as inanimate. Depending on the science focus, you may use a mealworm, a snail, a magnet, a lima bean, or any fruit in season. Your imagination and/or your curriculum create the only parameters.

Each member of the cooperative group should have the item. The items comprise a "family" and each group member will be carefully describing his/her member of the family in writing. Peanuts, walnuts, apples, oranges, rocks and snails are particularly good subjects. The directions should include these guidelines:

You will be introducing your walnut to everybody in your group. Even though they are all related, they haven't all met one another, so be sure to give yours a name. Describe your walnut's physical characteristics carefully so it can be distinguished from everyone else's walnut. Tell a little about your walnut's personality and something about its background. What are its future plans?

The questions might be written on the board or using an overhead projector and responded to one at a time so your students can organize their thoughts. Allow time for the observation and the writing, then ask each group member, in turn, to read their descriptions to one another. With that completed, direct each group to compose a brief family history with biographical information about each family member. The group may choose a recorder, or that job may be assigned, but each group will create one final product which will include something about everybody's walnut. Don't forget a surname for this nutty family. This marriage of science and silliness, personification and creative writing will be a memorable experience for your students. It also provides an opportunity for writing across the curriculum. With a title and some illustrations, perhaps a book would be in order.

Summary:

Debriefing may include the following questions:

How did your feelings about your walnut change from the beginning of the assignment to the end?

What distinguishing characteristic would enable you to pick your walnut out of a basket full of walnuts?

Did you learn anything about the qualities of walnuts that could be related to people?

IT ALL ADDS UP

Subject Area: Math

Directions:

The processes which engage children in active learning are clearly evident in CONSENSUS. As a vehicle for math instruction, it is noteworthy among cooperative strategies because it is an ideal format for student interaction with curriculum, open-ended problem solving, manipulative math activities, contextually-based math, and information processing. With this strategy, every group member has input and a group product will always result.

Contextually-based math is math which relates to subject matter being studied. An example is the following lesson which expands upon the newspaper article, "Crayola introduces 8 new colors" (see page 74). By thematically extending a current events article into the world of math, the real world is brought into the classroom. Data collected by Crayola manufacturers, Binney & Smith, determined the colors of new crayons to be added to their crayon boxes. The article stated that the most popular colors in the nation were red and black. Further information included the statement that "Boys seem to favor fluorescent colors and girls prefer pastels..."

The article offers a perfect lead-in to a cooperative group project, that of gathering data and creating a format for reporting that data. The product which results is the outcome of consensual behavior. In this case, group members may be directed to create a questionnaire which would determine whether the students in the school also liked red and black the best, and whether boys did prefer fluorescent colors and girls, pastel colors. The construction of the questionnaire or a format for collecting a random sample may require some preparatory lessons and/or some prior instruction. You might ask:

If a random sampling involves questioning only one out of four students, how could you be sure to do just that? (One way would be to ask a teacher with 28 students if you could question seven of them.)

Other points needing clarification may include deciding what percentage of the student body would be a representative sampling, how to prepare the questionnaire so that questions do not indicate bias, and accepted school procedure for conducting out-of-classroom surveys. It might also be a good idea to prepare staff members for visits from students.

Summary:

As cooperative groups are involved in collecting and processing information and preparing to report to the entire class, there is some extraordinary learning taking place. Real life has entered the picture along with meaning and involvement. The focus is on the children as active learners who readily take ownership of their group's creation. In today's world, everyone has an opinion. Use the news as a basis for quantifying those opinions.

As information is gathered, instruction could encompass reporting skills as well as percentages, ratios, probability, and graphs and tables.

BLOWING HOT AND COLD

Subject Area: Math, Science

Directions:

The correlation of group processing behaviors and higher level thinking skills becomes even more obvious when the study of science is thematically integrated with open-ended math experiences. The following activity incorporates classifying, interpreting, organizing, categorizing, and comparing data which is initially collected individually. The group will be involved in constructing a graph or chart to record their collective findings. In the process of gathering information, the newspaper will be used as a source of reference.

An activity of this type, which cannot be accomplished in one day, becomes almost a mini-unit of study. Its ongoing nature serves to strengthen group bonding as group members grow to be more interdependent. For a five day time period, ask your students to record the high and low temperatures for five cities in different geographic areas of the country. Each student in the group should be assigned a different five cities. This can be accomplished by the group itself using the weather page in the newspaper. During the five day period in which they are gathering data, you may wish to teach the various ways that data can be recorded. Charts, graphs of all sorts, and diagrams are possibilities. At the end of the allotted time period, each group may decide on the way to present its information.

All the data must be presented by the group as a completed project. Neatness and organization of data and will be important. Agreement on format and title will be additional areas where consensus is necessary. You may wish to ask for hypotheses about future weather behavior or conclusions, if any, that could be reached.

Summary:

Variations on thematic ways to involve children in integrated projects such as this one are endless. Depending on the grade level of your students, you also may ask them to create word problems based on temperature differences, or problems involving geographical distances. Perhaps hypotheses can be made related to geographical regions. Help them to draw some conclusions from their findings. As you debrief your students following their reports, some possible questions to ask might be:

What did you learn about the relationship between geography and meteorology? How did working together help you reach conclusions?

How would the project have been different if you'd worked alone?

Do you have any thoughts about another project of this type that you would like to investigate?

What was the most interesting thing you learned?

GROUP PROJECTS

Subject Area: Math

Directions:

There are countless ways of generating cooperative activity in the classroom to achieve specific purposes. Experiences in math and problem solving can be structured and planned to achieve both productive teamwork and enhanced learning.

Because there is increased emphasis on the **process** of solving problems, the following cooperative group projects are both open-ended and process-oriented:

Interest Centers: Teachers frequently set aside a table or corner of the room for theme-focused special displays and/or enrichment activities. Assign the responsibility for these centers to your cooperative groups on a rotating basis. The group will be responsible for setting up an interest center with a math and/or problem solving focus. Some examples of this might include logic problems, number puzzles, geometry (e.g. geo-blocks, geo-boards), measurement (volume, weight), or graphing.

Your students will be accountable for working with you to: choose a location and needed furniture, determine the length of time the center should be kept before it changes, plan the kinds of items to be put in the center, and obtaining any special equipment needed.

Positions within the group can be assigned (see **TAKE A POSITION**) to ensure the success of this project. The following tasks will also be necessary: meeting with the school's librarian or media specialist to gather books, kits, slides, filmstrips, cassettes, pamphlets, charts, or pictures; keeping careful notes of all materials borrowed and their sources; creating artwork for backdrops and captions; writing explanatory information or directions; and presenting and explaining the activities to the entire class.

Bulletin Boards: Much of the same preparatory work will need to be done when a group takes responsibility for a bulletin board. In addition, the group should be required to sketch the bulletin board they plan to put up. Your students should be made aware that a good bulletin board covers only one topic or theme and that the most

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effective bulletin boards need to be on a carefully chosen topic that reinforces what the class is studying, has studied, or will be studying. Discuss also, that an artistic, eye-catching board will promote interest. A bulletin board may also suggest or provide activities for enrichment related to past studies.

Be sure that credit for the board and the interest center is given to group members, an index card with members' names posted nearby is a good way to do this.

Panel Discussions: An excellent way to share what they have learned about a topic is for a cooperative group to hold a panel discussion. This strategy would be appropriately used to discuss findings from a research activity (e.g. the questionnaire about crayon colors), to teach and reinforce the concepts introduced on bulletin boards and at interest centers, or to share information and materials. Once again, responsibilities are assigned to the group members and an organizational meeting will be necessary.

Once the topic has been selected, the cooperative group, as members of the panel, must divide their chosen topic into sub-topics or interest areas. Each must then become an authority on one of those sub-topics. Essentially, that means they must prepare their remarks with care. One panel member should be the moderator. The moderator is the one who must keep the discussion going smoothly. The best way to ensure a smooth discussion is to carefully determine who is responsible for each sub-topic and have each of those students submit a list of questions they are prepared to answer. When you have approved the questions, a copy of them should be made for the moderator. The moderator is then prepared to ask those questions of the panel when they present their discussion to the class.

The moderator also has the function of briefly summing up what the members of the group have said. Brief rehearsal-type practices may be held, but certainly aren't essential. Discussions and speeches are best if extemporaneous rather than memorized.

Summary:

Although exercises such as these are routine in many classrooms, they are rarely focused on problem solving and math. The careful structuring of these three activities provides other avenues for individual accountability and independent learning to play a major role in achieving group goals.

ON LOCATION

Subject Area: Social Studies

Directions:

The following geographic themes are ideal topics for cooperative group work:

- **location** (how far away from home it is, longitude, latitude, continent)
- **place** (size, similarities of plants and animals to those at home, climate, physical features, people's nationalities and occupations)
- **movement** (how you would travel there, goods imported and exported, people moving to and from)
- **human/environment interactions** (use of land, changes in the land use, where people live, why they settled there, resources)
- **regions** (languages spoken, political divisions, similarity to neighbors in traditions, language, climate)

To illustrate changes through time and land use, to be made aware of choices people make in their occupation of the land, and to practice "seeing" geography, the following lesson is offered:

Each group of four is to share a large, poster-sized sheet of butcher paper or newsprint and crayons or felt pens. One student is designated as the one to actually draw. All students will have input as you read each task aloud. Instruct them to draw the largest island that they can fit onto the sheet. Following that, introduce some simple symbols for mountains, lakes, and rivers; all the other required additions may be stick-like and/or representational.

The instructions which follow require varying features to be added to the islands (via their appropriate symbols). All decisions must be made by consensus:

Put some mountains on your island.

Add a river and a lake.

Several families are getting tired of crowded conditions where they live and they have decided to move to your island. Draw places to live for ten families.

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They will grow some of the things that they need to eat, but they have to buy the rest. Draw a market for them.

The children need a school and a schoolteacher. Draw a school and add a house for the schoolteacher.

The island is so lovely that no one wants to leave. They want to work near where they live. They decide to avoid commuting and to build a factory on the island. Draw the factory.

With work available, more families come. Draw housing for ten more families.

Now you must have a gas station to take care of all the cars. Draw a gas station.

People are concerned about pollution and overcrowding so they decide to organize and elect a mayor. Now, they need a town hall. Draw an office building to house the town hall.

Moms and dads are busy working long hours and sometimes they're too tired to cook. Better draw in a restaurant.

The population is growing and so is the trash and the sewage. You will need to build a trash-to-energy plant and a sewage treatment plant.

Twenty more families have heard about your paradise and are moving here. Add housing for them.

The price of land is going up and the traffic is terrible. Draw in a freeway and access roads.

What else is important for your island?

Add one or two more things your group believes your island needs.

Give your island a name.

Summary:

Provide plenty of time for the debriefing because students become very involved. Comparing and contrasting their islands leads to some interesting discoveries. You might ask:

How did the geography (landforms) of your island influence your group's decisions?

What did you learn?

What would you change?

Because such important learnings take place, consider repeating this exercise another time, allowing the groups to adjust and refine their decisions.

TELEVISION TABLETALK

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

While there are differing perspectives on the assigning of roles in cooperative learning groups, there are instances where it may be particularly desirable. Some learning experiences are enriched by the role assignments, each student thus bringing something distinct to the group experience.

The format for this activity works as well with videos and movies as it does with television programs. It is a viable cooperative group activity even as a homework assignment. One could argue ad nauseam about the merits, or lack thereof, of television, yet the results of making an assignment such as this one are so worthwhile that you will use it again and again for a variety of purposes.

This activity assumes that you would have a predetermined reason for students to watch a particular program. Reasons could include comparing and contrasting a book with its television version, a television special focused on something you are studying, an informed critique of a specific program, or consumer education. With some variations, a similar format would be an excellent model for gathering information in preparation for a debate.

Each group member is given a specific question to answer, problem to solve, or task to accomplish. If students are to learn from television, there must be a stated purpose for watching, and it must be understood by all group members. Two variations are possible with this: each group member could be asked to answer one question and to create a group summary the next day or, as in this assignment, each of the four group members is to answer all of the following questions (in complete sentences):

1. *Who was the character you found most interesting? Describe the physical characteristics of that person. Describe the character traits of that person.*
2. *Who was the least interesting character? Give a physical description of the character. Describe the character traits of that person?*
3. *Did the characters in the program act as real people do? Give examples. If the program was partly realistic and partly unrealistic, give examples of each.*

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4. *What would you think a viewer of this program could learn from watching it?*

(The reproducible form which follows may also be used, with the option of assigning one question to each group member or all questions to all group members. Remember, the final product is to be the sum total of individual efforts.)

The roles you will use are:

FACILITATOR: This student is to telephone and remind each group member to watch the assigned program.

QUESTIONER: The Questioner takes the responsibility for leading the group by asking the questions of each group member on the day following the assignment.

RECORDER: The Recorder takes notes on any comments that are made during the questioning period which might not be on someone's paper.

SUMMARIZER: The final product, the compilation of all the summaries, will be the job of the Summarizer.

When each of the above roles has been played out, there will be enough information for a paragraph to be written in answer to each of the four questions. Each group member will be responsible for writing a paragraph which incorporates the group's responses to one question. The Facilitator will summarize all of the answers to question one, the Questioner will summarize all of the answers to question two, the Recorder will summarize all of the answers to question three, and the Summarizer will answer the fourth question in the same way, in addition to being responsible for turning in a final product, a four paragraph group summary. (The Summarizer can write it out or ask each member to write his/her paragraph).

Summary:

The interdependency which this format accentuates is valuable in itself, but with the added interest of assigning roles and the variety of assignments possible, enthusiasm for homework can also be increased. Questions to be asked include:

What did you notice as you worked on your paragraph?

How did the information from each member of your group help you?

When you knew you had specific questions to answer, how did it affect your television viewing?

Have you any suggestions as to how this could have been done differently?

How do you see this format being used for other kinds of assignments?

TELEVISION TABLETALK

Name: ______________________________

Program Title: ______________________________

Purpose of Assignment: ______________________________

Answer all questions in complete sentences. Use additional paper, if necessary.

1. Who was the character you found most interesting? Describe the physical characteristics of that person. Describe the character traits of that person.

2. Who was the least interesting character? Give a physical description of that character. Describe the character traits of that person.

3. Did the characters in the program act as real people do? Give examples. If the program was partly realistic and partly unrealistic, give examples of each.

4. What would you think a viewer of this program could learn from watching it?

TESTWISE

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Have you ever noticed that some ideas are easier to accept because the reasoning behind the idea simply makes sense to you? Often, students are told to study for a test and even given class time to do so, but rarely are those students equipped to study effectively. Since time immemorial, and even with the advent of portfolio assessment, one of the jobs of a student is still to take tests. It makes good sense to teach them test-taking skills. **TESTWISE** is a cooperative strategy for test-takers. It incorporates some key tips for preparing for a test, introduces techniques for review, and establishes methods for preparing for and answering varied types of test questions.

Instead of a teacher-conducted review of material covered, utilize class time to have your cooperative groups conduct their own review. Each student in every group is to be responsible for formulating a predetermined number of questions - whatever you decide is adequate to cover the material. Students are to prepare answers for those questions on a separate sheet of paper. After every member of the group has completed that assignment, the group is to reach consensus on the "best" questions, creating a set of questions which represent input from everybody in the group. A recorder writes the group's questions on a sheet of paper and the answers to the questions can be written by a second group member on another sheet of paper.

All groups are to keep their answer sheets and pass their question sheets to another group. Your students may work together to answer the questions posed by another cooperative group. When all groups have completed the task, **TESTWISE** further reinforces the review process by allowing each group to read the correct answers to the group who took their test.

This procedure can be used in all subject areas and is even more effective when students have learned more about test format.

CELESTIAL SNOWBALLS

Subject Area: Science

Directions:

The purpose of testing is to provide information to both the student and the teacher about the student's learning. Despite the importance of test-taking skills, many of our students do not know how to study for tests. Cooperative groups provide a non-threatening setting for learning how to study. While the science selection, "Celestial Snowballs," is used to illustrate one technique of **TESTWISE**, keep in mind that the technique has validity across the curriculum. This approach guides beginning test-takers through one simple procedure designed to teach them how to zero in on important information. At the same time, it teaches students how to ask effective questions. In doing so, they are also learning the answers to those questions.

Tell your students that good test-takers get ready for a test by trying to figure out what questions will be asked. Have them use **SHAREAROUND** and each read a paragraph of the selection within their groups. "Celestial Snowballs" has a great deal of factual information in it. Point out to your students that each paragraph contains important information, so that they should create at least one question for each paragraph. Some paragraphs have a great deal of information and may require more than one question. Tell them that they should each have a total of ten questions of their own, one for each paragraph and three others, before they begin to work in their groups. Suggest that questions and answers be written on separate pages.

Some additional suggestions might be:

Remember that questions begin with the words: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

Ask questions which can't be answered "yes" or "no."

Look for the main idea in each paragraph.

Find out the definitions of the words you don't know.

The words ***describe, discuss, explain, list, define,*** *and* ***compare*** *are also words which may be used to phrase questions.*

When each individual has created his/her ten questions, group members work together to create a group sheet of the ten best questions. Obviously, each group should know the answers to its own

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questions. Within this structure, group members work on consensus-building skills, bonding, and studying as they become testwise. Each group passes its questions to another group who take the test cooperatively, with a recorder writing group responses.

Summary:

You may wish to use a few questions taken from the various lists to construct your own test. Another thought might be to test each group on its own questions. When this **TESTWISE** activity has been completed, and your test has been taken, ask:

How did this type of studying help you?

What did you learn when you worked together to create "best" questions?

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS FOR "CELESTIAL SNOWBALLS"

1. How is a comet described?
2. What kind of orbits do they have?
3. What is perihelion?
4. What do solar winds do?
5. What are the two parts of the head of a comet?
6. What makes a comet look so big?
7. How does the sun influence a comet?
8. How do planets influence a comet?
9. How are meteor showers related to comets?
10. Who thought comets were burning patches of air?

CELESTIAL SNOWBALLS

Bags full of nothing, dirty snowballs traveling on journeys with no end - that's what comets are. These billions of collections of metal and stone, chips, ice, dust, and gases make trillion-mile trips into space and revolve around the sun in elliptical orbits sometimes thousands or millions of years in duration.

As a comet returns from the far reaches of its trip into outer space and approaches perihelion (its closest contact with the sun), the metals melt and turn into gas, the gases expand forming a larger and larger halo around the comet core. The closer to the sun the comet gets, the more expanded becomes the gaseous halo. It may extend thousands of miles across. The solar winds, a constant stream of particles emitted by the sun, push these gases away from the head of the comet. The gases pushed away form the comet's tail forever after point away from the sun. In its first reunion with the sun and its winds, the tail moves behind the head or over to the side and goes in front of the head as it leaves the sun. As gas in the tail absorbs radiation from the sun it becomes luminous and glows.

The head of a comet thus consists of a nucleus or center which contains ice, rock, metals, dust, and gases. This part may be only a mile or two wide. This dirty ice nucleus is explained as originating with the formation of the solar system when there were many bits and pieces of ice and dust in space. Around the nucleus is a cloudy covering called the coma. The coma is said to be formed by evaporation of the ice in the nucleus. The nucleus and coma are usually only a few miles across, although some sources report comas extending to thousands of miles. It is the tail which accounts for the comet's impressive size, and it is the tail which scientists say could fit into a suitcase (even though it might extend hundreds of millions of miles).

The influence of the sun includes not only the formation of the comet's tail, and the comet's speed, but its color. A comet may be orange, blue, yellow, or green depending on the comet's distance from the sun. The reflection of the sun's light and the amount of radiation absorbed from the sun also influence the comet's color. In addition to that impact, the sun is one focus of the elliptical orbits in which comets travel. The sun has influenced comets for as long as the solar system has existed. The paths of comets can be calculated and their return to viewing distance can be accurately figured because of their relationship to the sun.

Comets are also influenced by the pull of the planets and can be forced out of regular orbits. Jupiter and Neptune have both collected comets because of their gravitational pull.

Each time a comet completes its orbit and goes past the sun, material from its nucleus is turned into gas and becomes part of the tail. The nucleus becomes smaller and smaller and the lifetime of a comet is gradually reduced. (Sometimes lost and leftover rock and dust particles continue orbiting and form the basis for meteor showers.) The comet may still survive for thousands of years but may change in other ways. Biela's comet separated into two parts and eventually became Bielid meteors.

We are now far more well-informed regarding the make-up of comets than was Aristotle. He believed that they were simply patches of air which caught fire and burned. We know they are dirty snowballs which have provided years of speculation and intrigue as distant relatives of the sun's family.

LAND OF THE RISING SUN

Subject Area: Social Studies

Directions:

The selection entitled "Japan" is fairly typical of the dry material which students sometimes encounter. As much as we'd like it, we don't always have exciting resources to teach what must be taught. Studying for a test based on the information in the selection can be made a lot more interesting by employing **TESTWISE** strategies.

Because the information is neatly ordered in paragraphs, students in cooperative groups may decide to use **SHAREAROUND** to familiarize themselves with the material. Your role in these initial stages is to review the words which are basic to questioning: who, what, where, when, why, and how. Additional help could be given by including: explain, name, compare and contrast, and list.

On a paragraph by paragraph basis, tell each student to find one or two questions and write them down. When each group member has done so, the group works together to create its own list of the ten best questions. The answers to the group's questions are to be written on a separate sheet.

Possible questions for this selection might be:

1. What is Japan's nickname?
2. Who are Japan's nearest neighbors?
3. What body of water is on the east side of Japan?
4. Name Japan's four main islands.
5. What is the capital of Japan?
6. What is Japan's most famous volcano?
7. List three important crops.
8. Name three important industries.
9. Why must Japanese farmers terrace their land?
10. On what island is Japan's capital?

When the questions have been formulated, they are to be given to another group to answer and students may work together on the answers. Groups may correct one another's tests and you may choose to use some of the better questions on your own test.

Summary:

Debriefing after this kind of involvement allows your students to talk about the influence this kind of preparation has on their test-taking skills. To extend learnings, you may wish to add some inference-type questions so that some higher level thinking skills will be exercised.

JAPAN

Far across the Pacific Ocean is the country of Japan. Japan is part of the continent of Asia and is a land so far east of Europe that many Europeans believed it was the end of the earth. Often, we use the words "The Orient" or "The East" to refer to the countries of Asia. It is interesting that the Latin word "oriens" means "direction of the rising sun" and Japan is often called "The Land of the Rising Sun."

Japan is a mountainous country made up of many islands. It is separated from the mainland of Asia by the Sea of Japan. To the east of Japan is the Pacific Ocean. Japan's nearest neighbors are China, Korea, and Siberia. Japan has over three thousand islands, but there are four major islands. They are Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu. Hokkaido is the most northern island. Honshu is the largest island, has the most people, and the largest cities. Tokyo, the capital of Japan, is on Honshu. Shikoku and Kyushu are southwest of Honshu.

Japan is a land of volcanoes. In fact, it was volcanic action that formed the islands. Hot springs are found throughout Japan because of the underground volcanic activity. There are approximately one hundred and fifty volcanoes, but one is the most famous. It is Mount Fuji, over twelve thousand feet high. When it erupted over almost three hundred years ago, it covered Tokyo with six inches of volcanic ash. Tokyo is over seventy-five miles away from Mt. Fuji.

Because there is so little flat land in Japan, Japanese farmers have learned to create terraces in the mountain sides to plant their crops. Over half of the flat land is used for growing rice. Rice paddies can be seen all over Japan. Other crops grown include barley, wheat, potatoes, onions, soybeans, tea, tobacco, oranges, and other fruits.

The major industries of Japan include shipbuilding, electronic products, heavy machinery, steel, and motor vehicles. Radio and television sets, computers, and automation equipment are also important products. In addition, the Japanese fishing fleet is one of the largest in the world.

Japan is a modern country, although its limited farmland is made up primarily of small farms. The cities are crowded and suffer from pollution. Prices for consumer goods are very high and travel there is very expensive. Although the Japanese economy depends heavily on foreign trade, because they cannot produce everything they need, Japan has moved successfully into world markets and has made a great impact. There is little unemployment in Japan and a great deal of hard work.

SHORT CIRCUIT

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

Many teachers use journal writing to give children daily writing opportunities to record feelings, make observations, and to increase fluency. For this cooperative learning variation of journal writing, two children will have what is essentially, a conversation in writing. A spiral-bound notebook is ideal for this enterprise. A common format might include the date on one line, the topic (if one is given) on the next line, and the writing could begin on the following line. A line or two could be skipped between entries.

SHORT CIRCUIT is a written dialogue, in journal format, between cooperative group members. Because each cooperative group member will dialogue with only one other group member on any given day, you may wish to use **SHORT CIRCUIT** three days a week as both a *sponge (used* to fill short time periods with a meaningful assignment) and a *bonding* activity.

Set a special time of day for **SHORT CIRCUIT** so that it becomes an integral part of your program. You might consider a schedule which has group member #1 trading journals with group member #2 on Mondays, with group member #3 on Wednesdays, and with group member #4 on Fridays. The children understand that this is a quiet activity, that all communication must be in writing. Allow enough time for several sentences to be written, and no trades take place until the owner of the journal has first responded to the prompt, question or topic. While it is not necessary for a topic to always be given, your students may suggest them when you don't. Comments can be elicited on such disparate subjects as opinions on assemblies (or opinions on anything), suggestions for the school, ideas for field trips, reasons for enjoying a specific activity, etc. Remember to phrase your prompt so that children may comment to one another and not to you, although they should know that you also are part of their audience.

One way that teachers can be part of the audience for children's journal writing is for the children to fold a page back in their notebooks that they particularly want the teacher to see. You might collect the journals from different groups on different days so that you have time to respond. Positive responses or questions can be made on post-it notes or verbally. These are the children's journals and your comments need to be separate.

Discuss the importance of caring about each other's journals. No one will treasure these reflections if the notebooks are not written in neatly. As **SHORT CIRCUIT** is continued over a period of time, allow for some opportunities for children to share with the entire class a dialogue they particularly enjoyed, changed their minds about, or a response which made them laugh. **SHORT CIRCUIT** will provide sparks for future creative writing assignments and will, as an added benefit, give your students firsthand experience in writing dialogue.

I THINK I'LL MOVE TO AUSTRALIA

Subject Area: Guidance, Language

Directions:

SHORT CIRCUIT is journal writing with a difference. Using the cooperative group setting, sharing dyads (groups of two within the group of four) provide a support group which can have great power for students of all ages. With a specific topic and a stated time limit, your students are provided a forum for a short uninterrupted time to talk in writing with one another in writing. When the topic relates to feelings and the prompt is not given in isolation, but is given in relation to subject matter or literature, there is a great lessening of anxiety. Responses toward a subject or topic are far less threatening than self-disclosure, yet this process acts as a catalyst for helping children learn who they are while they become receptive to learning about one another.

Judith Viorst's book, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Day*, is an example of how to use good children's literature to create a prompt which deals with the issues faced by children. Judith Viorst manages to put some humor into the trials Alexander encounters, and you may choose to read the story to your group to set the stage for the **SHORT CIRCUIT** activity. After reading, the written dialogue you will generate will be from this prompt:

Think about a day when nothing seemed to go right. What happened? How did you feel about each event? Did the day ever get straightened out? How? How did you feel about that?

Each group member will write to that prompt and, when finished, will trade journals with only one other designated group member. That student responds to what has been written in the journal, but not to the original prompt. Comments can range from sympathy and empathy to suggestions and advice. As the directions state, your prompt should encourage your students to comment to one another, each being the audience for the other's thoughts.

Summary:

It is suggested that a new topic be used each time **SHORT CIRCUIT** is part of journal writing. It is important that each group member has a chance to respond to the prompt and to respond to one other group member, but, ordinarily, there is no need for continued dialogue. Debriefing may get back into the feelings expressed:

How did it feel while you were thinking about what to write?

How do you feel now about what happened on that day?

Is there anyone who would like to share what they wrote and something they liked about how someone responded?

ANNIE AND THE OLD ONE

Subject Area: Guidance, Language Arts

Directions:

Conversations in writing are a structured way to encourage thinking about feelings. Verbalizing those feelings in writing often can provide a "sponge" activity (see page 165) for the beginning of a group counseling session or the beginning of a school day. If the writing prompt is on the chalkboard, or posted somewhere easily seen in the classroom, your students can open their journals and start writing as soon as they are seated at their desks. Post your arrangement for exchanging journals so that your students may write and respond to writing with direction, but without a great deal of supervision.

Annie and the Old One, by Miska Miles (Boston, Little, Brown, 1971), details the loving relationship between Annie and her grandmother, who is going to die. Annie attempts to interrupt the inevitability of her grandmother's death by unraveling a rug being woven. The finished rug is intended to symbolize the end of her grandmother's life. For children in grades three through eight, it can be used to explain the view of life and death in an Indian culture, and it can open the way for children to express their own feelings about loss, and about times when they wished everything to stay the same. Annie's grandmother tells her:

My granddaughter, you have tried to hold back time. This cannot be done. The sun comes up from the edge of the earth in the morning. It returns to the edge of earth in the evening. Earth, from which good things come for the living creatures in it. Earth, to which all creatures finally go.

Ask:

Has there ever been a time when you wished everything to stay the same, when you wanted time to stand still? Did you try and do something about it?

Summary:

By using the story as a forum, the sensitive topic of death and loss can be introduced. The question about wanting things to stay the same allows for commentary that can deal with other issues as well. When the children have had time to write and to respond, allow time for the sharing of thoughts verbally.

JOURNAL CONNECTION

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

For two children to have a conversation in writing, the subject or topic to be written about must involve the emotions in some way. This cooperative activity, which works its way around the group in different combinations of dyads suggests topics which are thematically related to good children's literature. Some of the topics suggested below in italics are followed by titles of books which may be read to the entire class prior to the actual journal assignment. These titles are noted either primary or intermediate to indicate their most appropriate use. There are other wonderful books which will give you further ideas of your own. This is just a jumping off point. **SHORT CIRCUIT** serves several purposes as it "connects" children to literature and to their feelings.

Have you ever felt you were right about something and no one agreed with you? Did you feel the need to prove that you were right? What did you do? Did it work? (*The Gift*, Joan Lowery Nixon, intermediate)

Have you ever stood up for something you thought was right even though a lot of people got mad at you?

If you knew by practicing hard you would become the best in your school at something, what would you work on? (*Be a Perfect Person in Just Three Days*, Stephen Manes, intermediate)

If you were given $1,000.00 to use to help other people, how would you spend it? (*The Seventeenth Swap*, Eloise McGraw, intermediate)

If you could live someone else's life for just one week, would you? Who would you choose? (*The One in the Middle is the Green Kangaroo*, Judy Blume, intermediate)

If you had to live with another family for two years, who would you choose? (*Hello, My Name is Scrambled Eggs*, Jamie Gilson, intermediate)

If you could select only one food to eat, but you could have as much of it as you wanted for the next week, what would you pick? Why?

(Continued Next Page)

What do you think is the most unfair thing about the way your family is run? (*Lily and the Runaway Baby*, Susan Shreve, intermediate; *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Day*, Judith Viorst, primary)

What were some of your favorite things to do when you were little? (*When I Was Young in the Mountains*, Cynthia Rylant, primary)

Who would you like to get a letter from? Why?

Think of a time when you met someone and you thought they were too different from you to be your friend. Did you ever get to know that person and like them even though they were different? (*Old Henry*, Joan W. Blos, primary and intermediate)

Do you think boys or girls have it easier? Explain.

What are the biggest differences between what you see on television and what happens in the real world?

What would be the advantages and/or disadvantages of having an identical twin?

What talent would you like to have? What would you do with it? (*Lentil*, Robert McCloskey, primary)

If you had to give yourself a nickname because of something wonderful that you'd done, what would it be? Why? (*Miss Rumphius*, Barbara Cooney, primary and intermediate)

What was your favorite hiding place when you were little? How did you feel when you were hiding there?

When you think about things that you wish would happen in the future, what are they?

Did you ever have a dream that seemed so real that you thought it had really happened? (*The Magic Honey Jar*, Susi Bohdal, primary)

Summary:

An essential component of **SHORT CIRCUIT** is a well-phrased question based on a student's previous experience. Children can write about what they know about, so background and some emotional involvement work together to provide the material for self-expression and the response commentary. Since the children are responding to one another's answers, there is no reason why some of these topics can't be used as a weekly topic. The book suggestions given here are those that work for the issues above, but many will also provide openings for discussion of other issues.

LEND A HAND

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

This strategy, quite similar to the Jigsaw approach described in other publications on cooperative learning, is a simplified version which requires little, if any preparation. Any strategy which requires a great deal of planning or major revisions in lesson format is not going to be used. Because this works beautifully in a myriad of situations, the key is to use it only if it fits, and you'll find that it fits in many places and serves many purposes.

The main premise of **LEND A HAND** is that work is divided so that each group member has specific duties to accomplish that are part of a larger whole. These could be the answers to part of a list of questions, the definitions to part of a list of vocabulary words, research on part of a report, or responsibility for some part of a project. It becomes the charge of each individual within the cooperative group to teach the other members of the group what he/she knows. Understandably, it is your obligation as the teacher/facilitator to provide instruction or model the methods which are most effective for doing that.

Grade level appropriateness is particularly important with this strategy. While **LEND A HAND** can easily be used in the intermediate elementary grades (4,5, and 6), it must be remembered that children should be able to take responsibility for their own learning and be ready to be accountable before it is attempted earlier.

FROM A TO Z

Subject Area: Science

Directions:

The worksheet on the following page is an example of the type of assignment that easily fits into the format of this strategy. Even with a page prepared for a traditional assignment in which one student completes all definitions, **LEND A HAND** offers an alternative which increases both teamwork and learning. Each group member should be assigned an equal amount of work. Thus, if there are twenty words to define, each student in a group of four would be responsible for five definitions.

One particularly effective study skill for an exercise such as this one is the use of index cards. Provide each student with five cards, one for each word and its definition. Tell your students to write the word on one side of the card and its definition on the other side. With this method, students can quiz themselves as well as their teammates. Sufficient time with dictionaries should be provided as students look up the words they've been assigned. (You might wish to assign words by numbered student, "If you are number one, take words 2,4,6,8, and 10." Or, more simply, "Number one, take words one through five..."). Also, time must be obviously be allowed for students to become familiar with their definitions. This could be a homework assignment.

Now, the fun begins! Students in their cooperative groups are given time to teach the definitions of their words to their teammates. Now is a good time to teach mnemonics, or memory tricks, to your students. Ask them, "Is there something about a word that reminds you of its definition?" Holding up the word, reading its definition, discussing any mnemonic device, and repetition is the procedure which your students (as teachers) must follow. Variations on this format will occur as students become comfortable in a "teaching" mode. To maintain interest, a good strategy to use is to have a student teach only one definition at a time, then have the "teaching" job rotate to the next student.

To ensure that each student in the group has written definitions for each word, passing the index cards from person to person within the group allows all members to copy from one another's cards. All students are accountable for all definitions.

Summary:

Debriefing the students following an activity such as this one might include asking such questions as:

How did you feel when you were teaching?
How did you feel when you were being taught?
What was good about sharing information?

FROM A TO Z

The patience and attention to detail which Antarctic scientists display is incredible and the diversity of their specialties is amazing. From microbiology to vulcanology to palynology (the study of pollens within fossil rocks), there are constant efforts being made to discover the secrets of this icy desert.

A major difference between scientific endeavors of the past and present is that a scientist does not have to be an expert in survival skills in order to pursue his work. Working conditions on the ice have improved a great deal, and transportation to fully equipped base laboratories is more easily accomplished. It wasn't until the 1970's that women went to the South Pole as scientists, medical doctors, administrators, and technicians. Today, both men and women scientists from many nations work together to acquire scientific knowledge to enlighten us about Antarctica in ways that were unimagined even fifteen years ago.

Define the following terms, all of which have to do with Antarctic occupations:

1. glaciology ____
____
2. meteorology ____
____
3. seismology ____
____
4. microbiology ____
____
5. geology ____
____
6. botany ____
____
7. ornithology ____
____
8. marine biology ____
____

(Continued Next Page)

9. paleontology ______________________________

10. zoology ______________________________

11. geomorphology ______________________________

12. hydrography ______________________________

13. topographic engineering ______________________________

14. vulcanology ______________________________

15. physiology ______________________________

16. geography ______________________________

17. geochemistry ______________________________

18. geochronometry ______________________________

19. ethology ______________________________

20. paleobotany ______________________________

LISTEN, MY CHILDREN

Subject Area: Social Studies

Directions:

The use of two cooperative strategies in tandem occurs almost naturally as you gain familiarity with the usefulness of each alone. "Paul Revere's Ride" can be used to illustrate one of those instances in which the learning which occurs by using one strategy can be further enhanced by the use of another. **LEND A HAND** fits the assignment which follows, and **HIGHLIGHT** becomes the means by which **LEND A HAND**'s effectiveness is augmented. You will find countless occasions when a similar alliance works.

To begin, students in cooperative groups, armed with highlighting pens, are to go through Longfellow's poem and mark every word whose meaning they are unsure of. This can be done by assigning stanzas to individual group members, numbering off, or having everyone go through the entire poem. Group members should compare notes so that all words whose definitions are unknown are marked on all papers.

LEND A HAND requires an equitable distribution of labor as each team member takes responsibility for learning the definitions of words in assigned stanzas. (If you wish, see **TAKE A POSITION** to formally assign roles such as Facilitator, Doer, Checker, and Monitor). Words in each stanza which have been looked up are then explained to the group by the group member responsible. The group can self-test itself by going back to all of the highlighted words to make sure that they do have an understanding of unfamiliar words.

When utilizing literature such as "Paul Revere's Ride," I would be reluctant to go so far as to give a formal vocabulary test, but it might be a good idea to use a strategy such as **TAKE A NUMBER** to check for understanding.

The poetic language used in this poem includes some marvelous examples of metaphors, similes, and personification. A further activity might require students to locate those, compare notes, and discuss their meaning.

Summary:

Allow time for discovery and discussion. Children who have never before had positive experiences with poetry will be delighted to realize that understanding is possible. Ask:

What was your most exciting discovery?

Which phrase was your favorite?

What words painted a picture in your mind?

PAUL REVERE'S RIDE

By Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Listen, my children, and you shall hear
Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere.
On the eighteenth of April, in seventy-five;
Hardly a man is now alive
Who remembers that famous day and year.
He said to his friend, "If the British march
By land or sea from the town tonight,
Hang a lantern aloft in the belfry arch
Of the North Church tower as a signal light,—
One, if by land, and two, if by sea;
And I on the opposite shore will be,
Ready to ride and spread the alarm
Through every Middlesex village and farm,
For the country folk to be up and to arm."

Then he said, "Good night!" and with muffled oar
Silently rowed to the Charleston shore,
Just as the moon rose over the bay,
Where swinging wide at her moorings lay
The Somerset, British man-of-war;
A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar,
And a huge black hulk, that was magnified
By its own reflection in the tide.

Meanwhile, his friend, through alley and street,
Wanders and watches with eager ears,
Till in the silence around him he hears
The muster of men at the barrack door,
The sound of arms, and the tramp of feet,
And the measured tread of the grenadiers,
Marching down to their boats on the shore.

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Then he climbed the tower of the old North Church
By the wooden stairs, with stealthy tread,
To the belfry-chamber overhead,
And startled the pigeons from their perch
On the somber rafters, that round him made
Masses and moving shapes of shade, —
By the trembling ladder, steep and tall,
To the highest window in the wall,
Where he paused to listen and look down
A moment on the roofs of town,
And the moonlight flowing over all.

Beneath in the churchyard, lay the dead,
In their night-encampment on the hill,
Wrapped in silence so deep and still
That he could hear, like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent,
And seeming to whisper, "All is Well!"
A moment only he feels the spell
Of the place and the hour, and the secret dread
Of the lonely belfry and the dead;
For suddenly all his thoughts are bent
On a shadowy something far away,
Where the river widens to meet the bay, —
A line of black that bends and floats
On the rising tide, like a bridge of boats.

Meanwhile, impatient to mount and ride,
Booted and spurred, with a heavy stride
On the opposite shore walked Paul Revere.
Now he patted his horse's side,
Now he gazed at the landscape far and near,
Then, impetuous, stamped the earth,
And turned and tightened his saddle-girth;
But mostly he watched with eager search
The belfry-tower of the Old North Church,
As it rose above the graves on the hill,
Lonely and spectral and somber and still.
And lo! as he looks, on the belfry's height
A glimmer, and then a gleam of light!
He springs to his saddle, the bridle he turns,
But lingers and gazes, till full on his sight
A second lamp in the belfry burns!

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A hurry of hoofs in a village street,
A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,
And beneath, from the pebbles, in passing, a spark
Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet:
That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night;
And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight
Kindled the land into flame with its heat.
He has left the village and mounted the steep,
And beneath him, tranquil and broad and deep,
Is the Mystic, meeting the ocean tides;
And under the alders that skirt its edge,
Now soft on the sand, now loud on the ledge,
Is heard the tramp of his steed as he rides.

It was twelve by the village clock,
When he crossed the bridge into Medford town.
He heard the crowing of the cock,
And the barking of the farmer's dog,
And felt the damp of the river fog,
That rises after the sun goes down.
It was one by the village clock,
When he galloped into Lexington.
He saw the gilded weathercock
Swim in the moonlight as he passed.
And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare,
As if they already stood aghast
At the bloody work they would look upon.

It was two by the village clock,
When he came to the bridge in Concord town.
He heard the bleating of the flock,
And the twitter of birds among the trees,
And felt the breath of the morning breeze
Blowing over the meadows brown.
And one was safe and asleep in his bed
Who at the bridge would be first to fall,
Who that day would be lying dead,
Pierced by a British musket-ball.

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You know the rest. In the books you have read,
How the British Regulars fired and fled.—
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,
From behind each fence and farmyard wall,
Chasing the red-coats down the lane,
Then crossing the fields to emerge again
Under the trees at the turn of the road,
And only pausing to fire and load.

So through the night rode Paul Revere;
And so through the night went his cry of alarm
To every Middlesex village and farm, —
A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!
For, borne on the night-wind of the Past,
Through all our history, to the last,
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,
The people will waken and listen to hear
The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed,

BEYOND THE BASICS

Subject Area: Social Studies

Directions:

Have there been times during the school year when you've wondered how you would ever have enough time to do justice to a particular unit of study? This strategy gives you a workable option for having your students gain knowledge in depth in a limited time period. **LEND A HAND**'s intention is to divide work so that individuals are responsible for only portions of it, but they must impart it to the rest of their group. This version divides work between cooperative groups, with the same stricture, each group must present its work to the rest of the class.

A unifying theme is always necessary, as is some basic background knowledge. This strategy works best when the students share some common understandings and these projects become extensions—like icing on the cake. This has worked well in both primary and intermediate classes because it allows children a chance to be specialists and to work at their own ability level.

For the purpose of illustrating the procedure, it is assumed that there has been some reading assigned to provide background on Japan. Because the Japanese culture is a wonderfully rich one for study, there are more possible study topics than you will have cooperative groups. The topics listed on the next page may be assigned or may be chosen by your groups and a consultation time arranged so you may work with them on their presentations to the class.

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GARDENS FLOWER ARRANGING ARCHITECTURE

FESTIVALS GAMES LANGUAGE

FOOD AND COOKING CALLIGRAPHY

SUMO WRESTLING, KARATE, AND JUDO ORIGAMI

THEATRE: KABUKI, NOH, BUNRAKU

HISTORICAL PERIODS POETRY CLOTHING

MUSIC AND INSTRUMENTS FOLKTALES

JAPANESE ART SAMURAI

RELIGION: BUDDHISM, SHINTOISM

CHOOSE AN ISLAND: HONSHU, HOKKAIDO, KYUSHU, SHIKOKU (Draw a map, label ports and major cities and bodies, prepare a presentation describing interesting facts about the island)

LIFE IN A JAPANESE HOME CUSTOMS ECONOMY

Summary:

If a week of background is followed by a week of time allotted for group research and preparation, the third week would be ideal for group presentations. These should be presentations, not simply reports. Flower arranging can be demonstrated, food can be eaten, origami can be practiced, Japanese words can be taught. Children whose learning styles are not best suited to traditional school work have an opportunity to work in a mode comfortable to them. While they are learning subject information in depth, groups practice the skills of interdependence and great creativity and originality are among the positive outcomes you will observe.

CO-OP CONSULTATION

STRATEGY OVERVIEW

To assist students in assuming responsibility for their learning, this strategy introduces the idea that the group is to work together until a specified time or until a specific task is completed. At that time, each group sends a representative to meet with the teacher/facilitator for input, feedback, or coaching, but essentially, consulting.

CO-OP CONSULTATION may be done with group representatives one-at-a-time or with all group representatives at once. Using numbers once again to distribute responsibility equitably, or appointed for a specified period of time, the group representative is sent by the group to meet with the teacher (or resident expert) in order to get feedback on group work completed, clarification of directions, or further instructions. Students may trust their memories or take notes, but their responsibility to their group needs to be impressed upon them.

This strategy connects you and the cooperative groups in a more formal communication model. Its intent is to supplement, but not replace, the purposeful circulating which a teacher must do during group activities. **CO-OP CONSULTATION** may also be seen as a fail-safe method which builds in success by establishing a format where failure is unlikely. It is appropriate to use consultation time to comment on group interactions, suggest alternatives to procedures being used, identify positive qualities and strengths in individuals as well as groups, and value and acknowledge work in progress. Time spent with group representatives may vary, but should be focused and rarely exceed five to ten minutes.

The consultation time provides some special teachable moments because your students have identified their own needs. There is a reason for them to listen carefully to the answers and/or the directions you give. As each representative returns to his/her cooperative group to convey what has been learned, group members will encourage the representative to assume the role of teacher because it benefits the entire group. Since we learn best by describing our knowledge to others, the power transfers from teacher to student, and then from student to student.

PAUL REVERE'S RIDE

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

After your students have gained familiarity with Longfellow's poem, "Paul Revere's Ride" (see page 176), take them one step further by utilizing this model to enhance their understanding of the author's use of imagery. A representative from each cooperative group is sent by that group to get feedback on the group's conclusions. That is, students in each cooperative group will discuss among themselves what they think the author meant by the words he chose to use. They will interpret and look for meaning in phrases you, or they, choose. The teacher's role in this strategy is to comment and clarify and to establish a format where everybody wins. Choose a Reporter or Checker for this role (see page 8), or rotate the responsibility among group members throughout the activity.

You may want to identify particular phrases for your students to study. These may be listed on the board or on an overhead projector. It is suggested that this be done one phrase at a time in order to avoid confusion. The following phrases are some which you might choose to use:

A phantom ship, with each mast and spar
Across the moon like a prison bar

... like a sentinel's tread,
The watchful night-wind, as it went
Creeping along from tent to tent

...And yet, through the gloom and the light,
The fate of a nation was riding that night

And the spark struck out by that steed, in his flight
Kindled the land into flame with its heat

And the meeting-house windows, blank and bare,
Gaze at him with a spectral glare

A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!

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After an adequate time for discussion has been allowed, ask for the group's representatives to be sent to join you one-at-a-time. Although there are instances where the consultation may occur in a small group format, in this case one-at-a-time is more effective and, also serves to heighten the interest. Allow each of the representatives to share his/her group's conclusions and be sure to acknowledge both good thinking and, if appropriate, comment on the positive interaction within groups. The students are to return to their groups and convey what they've learned during the consultation.

Summary:

A wide spectrum of communication skills are covered in this strategy. It is important to make the consultation time brief so that groups are not kept waiting too long. Often, an accompanying activity can fill wait time. Depending on your groups, you might even consider consulting when all phrases have been discussed. Although only one representative would be sent, those groups who work quickly would be able to consult as soon as they finished. Once understanding has been achieved, you might try a more creative activity by having your students individually rewrite a favorite stanza in a narrative format.

IT'S A PROBLEM

Subject Area: Math

Directions:

This is a great strategy for use at all grades, but this lesson focuses on second and third grade, and its purpose is to build skills and confidence when working on word or story problems. **CO-OP CONSULTATION** is a practical and workable classroom strategy for all grade levels, and its use is particularly effective when new concepts are introduced and must be practiced. Your students, in their cooperative groups, will be creating story problems based on a number sentence you provide. To begin, you might write this example on your chalkboard:

$$3 + 7 = 10$$

In their groups, the children will work together to invent a story whose facts match the number sentence you've provided. An example which would work would be:

> Jim had three slices of pizza. Dave ate seven slices. How many did they eat together?

As each group finishes composing its own story to match the facts given, a representative is sent from the group to consult with you regarding the correctness of their efforts. Those groups who succeed the first time may continue with the assignment, checking back with you as each problem is completed. The messenger from those groups who may be experiencing difficulty is given some ideas for adjusting the group's story and returns to the group. The difficulty of the number sentences would be gauged to reflect the ability of the students.

As skills build, an alternative variation would be to have all the groups create stories and then trade stories for the purpose of figuring out the number sentence required. The difficulty here is in the phrasing of the final question. Your role in this would be to check that the question asked is reflected in the answer given and to verify the accuracy of the number sentence.

Summary:

Discussion with the entire class following activities such as these should focus on such questions as:

Did everybody in the group test the solution (or read the problem) for accuracy?

What was the most difficult thing about this assignment?

What was the easiest?

Two-step questions, which will occur naturally because they appeal to children, must be dealt with in a similar fashion. The order in which the number sentences are presented is not only an important factor, but the final question must reflect all the input.

PIECES OF A DREAM

Subject Area: Social Studies

Directions:

Interpreting the meaning behind the written word is a difficult task for many children. It is made more difficult in the classroom where it is often a problem to discern who really understands and who is pretending to understand. There are usually a small number of children who volunteer answers and the waving hands frequently take precedence over lack of eye contact. The use of **CO-OP CONSULTATION** helps to solve this problem. As you introduce certain words and phrases from literature, your students will work in their cooperative groups to reach consensus on what they believe is being said. During that discussion time, everyone in the group is involved, because even if they are not doing a great deal of contributing, they are listening.

For the following activity, the phrases might be projected by means of an overhead projector or posted on large sheets of paper. As each phrase is shown, time is provided for group discussion. When the group has agreed on the meaning, a representative is sent to you and the consultation occurs. Any clarification needed is made during that meeting and then conveyed back to the group. Both memory and communication skills are necessary, their necessity being a reason why they will develop. The job of messenger should rotate among group members.

Excerpts from Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech, delivered in 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., are good examples of selections which might be more closely examined in the classroom.

Say,

Take a look at this excerpt from Martin Luther King's speech, "I Have a Dream." Talk about it in your groups and come to agreement about what you think it means.

"I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character."

(Continued Next Page)

Say,

You may use a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words or meanings you wish to check.

The group representative might come to you and say, "My group thinks it means that he wants his children to be liked because they are good people."

Another phrase:

"I have a dream...where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers."

What did he mean by **"...walk together as sisters and brothers"**

How about:

"I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight..."

Summary:

The purpose of this activity will have been achieved when all the students in the cooperative groups are able to answer questions indicating better understanding. The message may be sophisticated in some ways, but it is basic in others. Careful listening is the key, as is being able to describe knowledge to others. You may ask:

What did you learn from this activity?

What feelings did you have when your representative went to consult?

What feelings did you have when he/she returned?

I HAVE A DREAM

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day the state of Alabama, whose governor's lips are presently dripping with the words of interposition and nullification, will be transformed into a situation where little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today.

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

This is our hope. This is the faith with which I return to the South. With this faith we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope. With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

This will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning, "My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the pilgrim's pride, from every mountainside, let freedom ring."

And if America is to be a great nation this must become true. So let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire! Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York! Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania!

Let freedom ring from the snowcapped Rockies of Colorado!

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous peaks of California!

But not only that, let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi. From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

When we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing that old Negro spiritual,

"Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last!"

Delivered by Martin Luther King, Jr., March, 1963 at the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C.

A GARDEN CINDERELLA

Subject Area: Language Arts

Directions:

Poems with messages and underlying meanings are often too sophisticated for children to interpret by themselves. In addition, many children are intimidated by poetry because their exposure to it has been very limited. **CO-OP CONSULTATION** brings together the opportunity to work cooperatively to uncover the poet's intended message and the advantage of teacher input. It also provides a forum for testing one's ideas and brainstorming until there is understanding and consensus is reached. A copy of this lovely poem, written in the 1920's by Sarah Bixby-Smith, should be given to each cooperative group without explanation. The only direction should be that they read and discuss it, and look up any unfamiliar words.

When the poem has been read and discussed, the question to be asked, which requires consultation with the teacher, is:

What does the title of the poem mean?

As the groups send representatives to test their theories, more questions may be asked to help students see that the cereus is, indeed, Cinderella.

Summary:

Finding meaning in poetry involves looking for clues. In this case, knowing the meanings of all the words is a necessity. To debrief, once the mystery is solved, ask:

What words helped you to realize that the poet saw the cactus as kind of a Cinderella?

In what ways did the poet contrast the cactus with flowers?

How did the poet make events seem magical?

In what ways did the cereus become a queen?

An interesting and effective extension of this lesson would be one which pursues the use of personification in the poem and the way the poet used it to help contrast the characters in this selection. Once the poem is thoroughly understood, it would also make a beautiful **CO-OP CHORAL READING** choice.

A GARDEN CINDERELLA

A stone wall lies at the garden edge
Tumbled over with a sprawling hedge
Of cactus, rough and ragged and gray,
Despised by the flowers in their bright array;
Bougainvillea in her gorgeous gown,
Lovely lotus with her ruby crown,
Quaint oleander, a shepherdess,
Hibiscus, gay in her scarlet dress,
And stephanotis, with delicate grace,
Holding aloof her waxen face.
The dingy cactus must stay at the wall,
Scorned and slighted by them all.

But a witch woman rides the vagrant moon,
Peering down from her place in the skies
She has found a princess in the tattered disguise.
Thrice in the year she grants her a boon, -
With her crystal wand in the summer night
She breaks the spell. In the silver light
Night-blooming cereus stands, a queen,
Clad in robes of satin sheen;
Her snowy petals softly enfold
Pendent stamens of fine-spun gold
She is perfumed, perfect, a very delight.
The old stone wall is now her throne,
Where she in the garden reigns alone,
And lovers of beauty nightly pay
Homage to her who was once so gray.

by permission from PASEAR
by Sarah Bixby-Smith, 1926

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Susan Finney, the author of ***TOGETHER, I CAN***, was a classroom teacher for over twenty years. She is the author of nine books which focus on thematic teaching and integrated curriculum. In addition to magazine articles and the curriculum guide for San Diego's Arts Festival: Treasures of the Soviet Union, she has been a social science consultant for Harcourt Brace Jovanovich and for the San Diego County Office of Education, where she has also conducted numerous trainings in cooperative learning. Named a GATE Teacher of the Year (Gifted and Talented Education), she has been a frequent speaker at workshops for teachers of the gifted. As a mentor teacher, she presented seminars for implementing California's unique History-Social Science Framework. She currently coordinates a substance abuse prevention program and grant projects in the Encinitas Union School District near San Diego, California.

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TOGETHER, I CAN

Increasing Personal Growth and Creating Lifelong Learners Through Cooperative Learning

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